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ABSTRACT

A year-long ethnographic case study was conducted primarily to investigate the developmental nature of children's spontaneous grouping activities in an elementary school setting. Participant observation and related methods were conducted for two days a week (on average) in a small, traditional parochial school located in a lower-class integrated neighborhood in a large eastern city. In addition, the ecology of the children's groups and the organization of the school were investigated. It was found that second-grade children displayed only facsimiles of group structures: the group in the second-grade classroom was found to be an overlapping collection of friendships. By eighth grade, true groups came into existence. Among girls, rival groups formed within the class, and status was partially conferred by group membership. As the eighth-grade children progressed from grade to grade they were seen by adult personnel as having mature group concepts and coalition dynamics, which they did not in fact possess. The school inadvertently encouraged an eighth-grade collective to turn itself into a hostile coalition by labeling it a "clique." As a consequence, the "clique" learned what the functions of a group were supposed to be and promptly became a self-proclaimed adversary group with a full complement of criterial group features. Piagetian principles and related research were helpful in interpreting the children's group behavior. (Author/RH)

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CHILDREN'S GROUPS IN SCHOOL: A DEVELOPMENTAL CASE STUDY

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Children's Groups in School: A Developmental Case Study

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Overview

The purpose of the project was to gather field data on the nature of children's spontaneous grouping activities in a school setting. There were two main aspects to the governing rationale. First, almost nothing is known about children's natural grouping activities and their implications for schooling (Eisenstadt, 1956; Glassner, 1976). Most of the pedagogical literature is concerned with techniques for establishing and managing academic groups (Lifton, 1962; Newman, 1974; Polgar, 1976; Bossert, 1979). We are so quick to manage children academically that we have devoted very little attention to the question of what we are in fact attempting to control (Foster, 1974). Second, laboratory research on children's social behavior is acutely in need of real-world validation (Cole, 1978; Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1979). Controlled laboratory procedures may or may not be producing data that are relevant to everyday life. In particular, laboratory-tested developmental theory may or may not be generalizable to real-world settings. Does an understanding of Piagetian theory, for example, prepare us for ways that children's spontaneous school groups change with age (Furth, 1979)?

These questions were examined by means of a year-long case study. As the participant-observer, the first author, who lived in the school neighborhood for the first four months of the study, spent an average of two days a week in a small, traditional school. The setting was a lower class integrated neighborhood near the waterfront of a large Eastern city. The school is here called St. Angela's, and the city is called Plainfield.

In this report, we will summarize the following aspects of the complete study: (a) the ecology of the children's groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) — the history and sociology of the school and its neighborhood; the role of children's families in the formation of school policy; and the school's view of its role in preparing children for community objectives; (b) the organization of the school -- the physical plant as well as daily procedures, curriculum, and management policies, with attention on the 2nd and 8th grades, which formed the focus of our developmental contrast; and (c) the developmental nature of children's grouping activities -- with emphasis upon spontaneous, informal groups, as opposed to teacher-structured academic groups.

With respect to the latter, here is an overview of our conclusions: 2nd graders, 7-yr-old children, display only facsimiles of group structures as we have defined them (p. 54), and as they are intuitively defined by adults. What may appear to be a "group" in a 2nd grade classroom, is in fact an overlapping collection of pair-wise friendships. Even when 2nd graders consciously organize "clubs", they do form not true groups. Instead, their "clubs" are merely occasions for imitating pieces of group actions. For example, a 2nd grade "club" called "The Wanderers" imitated behavioral bits of the movie group, but was quite unable to assimilate the full group concept that the "Wanderers" exemplified. The children's imitative actions — very Piagetian in flavor -- could be thought of as play-practice for certain aspects of mature group behavior.

By 8th grade, however, true groups were appearing. Their nature differed for boys and girls. There were fewer boys than girls, and perhaps for that reason, coalitions did not form among the boys. All the boys functioned, in-

stead, as a wholistic group, and status was individually determined. Among girls, rival groups formed within the class, and status was partially conferred by group membership.

The children were usually seen by adult personnel as having mature group concepts and coalition dynamics which they did not in fact possess. The school inadvertantly encouraged an 8th grade collective to turn itself into a hostile coalition by labeling it a "clique" -- when the children, who transcribed the word as "click", had no idea what the term signified to adults. As a result of certain episodes, the "click" learned what the functions of a group were supposed to be, and promptly became a self-proclaimed one, with a full complement of criterial group features.

With reference to school practice, we have two recommendations: First, teachers and administrators at the elementary level should not be overly concerned with grouping activities. Stable coalition structures and dynamics are probably not really there. Second, school personnel should bear in mind that bureaucracy begets bureaucracy. Children who feel pressured by authorities will be motivated to form coalitions as a mode of self-protection. All of this takes time and energy from major schools goals of instruction.

With reference to laboratory-based theories, we found Piagetian principles and related research to be helpful in interpreting the everyday behavior of children's groups in schools, consistent with the work of Furth (1979), as well as Selman (1976; Selman & Byrne, 1974). Much more work of an ethnographic type will be needed, however, before we can reliably identify laboratory variables in real-world guises.

Methodology

A small parochial school serving 250 children from kindergarten through 8th grade was selected for intensive study. The school was located in a large Eastern city, near the waterfront. We shall call the school St. Angela's, and refer to the city neighborhood where it is located as Southeast Plainfield. All names of persons and places throughout the rest of this manuscript are pseudonyms, in order to insure confidentiality.

The method was that of participant observation as defined by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and McCall and Simmons (1969). This method includes a variety of techniques, including social interactions in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and informal interviewing, some systematic counting, and some collection of documents and artifacts (McCall, 1962). These techniques are employed to "thickly describe" a particular social system, giving rise to hypotheses phenomenologically founded in observed fact (Geertz, 1973). Although this method emphasizes induction and qualitative analysis, it can set the stage for quantitative and experimental techniques, as the two methodological approaches are compatible (Erickson, 1977; Lazarsfeld, 1972; Cole, 1978). The outline used in the following description has been adapted from Herriott (1977) and Dean, Eichorn, & Dean (1969).

Defining the Site

St. Angela's, in many ways, provided an ideal environment for our research. The school was small (enrollment figures are listed in Table 1) with only one grade level per classroom. This made it possible for a single researcher to cover all areas of the site in detail. Unlike public elementary

Table 1

ENROLLMENT FOR ST. ANGELA'S SCHOOL

1979-1980

GRADE	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	INDIAN	ASIAN	GREEK
K	24	11	13	16	8				
1	16	11	5	15	1				
2	26	12	14	11	12	2	1		
3	30	19	11	20	9			1	
4	29	11	18	20	6	2		1	
5	19	14	5	12	6				1
6	22	11	11	13	3				1
7	27	14	13	22	4	1			
8	25	10	15	21	2	1			1
TOTALS	218	113	105	155	51	6	1	2	3

schools in the area, St. Angela's classrooms went up to grade eight. St. Angela's had the widest age range of children within any single school in the Southeast Plainfield. This provided a unique opportunity to study peer groups of young children as well as adolescents. Also, the decentralized nature of the parochial school system within the city meant that permission for undertaking the study proceeded through the principal and school staff directly. This simplified immensely the chore of negotiating entry and setting up housekeeping. All in all, the school was an ideal place to study the social activity of a wide age range of children.

Although observations were centered at the school, attempts were also made to describe the community context of the children's groups. This was accomplished via the following procedures. Children at the school were asked where they went and what they usually did after school and on weekends. This led to the definition of various areas where the children associated. Both formal and informal meeting places were identified. Formal activities were generally more accessible over the short span of the study, and consisted of predetermined athletic events (basketball at the recreation center, roller skating at the rink in the city park, or extracurricular school sports), and school/community sponsored activities. The latter were particularly salient in the association network of the children, since the bond between the school, church, and neighborhood in this instance was close. For example, the school and church sponsored a party on St. Patrick's day, which had become an ongoing community tradition. Similarly, the school sponsored a community fair in the spring. These events were attended by the researcher, and instances of links in the children's friendship networks were noted.

Informal meeting places were also sought out, although systematic information on those areas was harder to obtain. When children were asked what they did after school, many reported that they either "hung out" on their block, went to the rather spacious city park, or walked around either of two nearby small business districts. Information concerning children's activities around informal meeting areas was gathered in two ways. First, in the course of interviewing children away from the school site or of parent interviews in the home, children were observed in various activities. Second, since the researcher lived in the neighborhood during the first four months of the project, he was able to frequent spots where he thought the children may "hang out." Also, in the normal course of his existence -- going food shopping, taking his children to the park, and washing clothes at the laundromat as any other community member might — the researcher's path often crossed that of the children at the school. This closeness to the site therefore led to sources of valuable information.

Mapping the Site

Site-mapping includes identifying the significant objects and spatial arrangements in the site, along with the names and groups of students involved in the study. Initial mapping took place via the principal's tour at the start of the project. The staff, during informal interviews, were asked to identify children and their friendship structures. Plans were initially made to utilize a student guide as Cusick (1973) had done. However, since the structure of this school was that of self-contained classrooms, and was otherwise unique as described in the following section on architecture, mobility of the students was low throughout the physical plant. Since 8th grade, for ex-

ample, was together throughout the day with little change in pupil composition, a guide was unnecessary. The bulk of time, then, was put into cultivating relationships with students which would lead to valid information as to group activities and perceptions. This relationship-building activity led to the development of several informants in the 2nd and 8th grades, staff, and neighborhood/parent groups.

Negotiating Entry

Officials from the central branch of the school administration were contacted as to the purposes of the study. In general, they evidenced little interest, a factor testifying to the loosely formed network of the Catholic school system. Although the schools are technically interconnected, they are not required legally to submit to the policies of the central office. The latter therefore serves as a clearinghouse of information and system support. It was enough that the school principal had legitimated the researcher's presence at the site.

Negotiation, then, proceeded directly through the principal -- Sr. T. In the spring of 1979, the researcher arranged several meetings with her to discuss the purposes of the study as outlined in the original grant proposal. Over the course of those meetings she was very receptive, anticipating the researcher's future presence on the premises, and accepting the fact that his activities would include interviewing, note taking, and classroom observation. The principal welcomed us warmly, and invited us to the first faculty meeting and lunch in September. The following notes from that meeting foreshadow aspects of school organization that influenced children's group activities.

We had just finished lunch. All the teachers and staff collected around a large square table. At present I am taking notes. All the teachers have folders. They look brand new. They have some papers. I also notice that they have some stationery, pens, and pencils in them. Some did not pick these up at the office in the morning. Sr. T. called the meeting to order and welcomed us all to St. Angela's this year and noted there was an open door policy for office visitation. What I believe she meant by that is that a teacher was free to come into her office at any time....

The principal then made a joke about kissing the electrician, someone they had coming in to fix the circuits in the place. She noted that he was a doll, and 'What is there is life but kissing?' and noted that they had such trouble getting the electrician in, and that was the only way she could keep him coming -- kissing him every time he did something right.

She then noted that the janitor quit, apparently he threw the keys at the principal, and therefore the teachers should not expect the repair projects to be done on time. Possibly they can get three mothers to volunteer to clean the premises three days per week....

Sr. T. then made a strong statement that she must aim for a strong discipline within the school. She showed a little book that she had ordered that was titled Helpful Hints on Discipline. She said, 'I don't mean rigid. All children ask for order in the room.' She noted that they are children, not little adults, and that each teacher must work with each student as an individual. She said, 'We must all agree that they answer us courteously rather than being flippant.' She then gave the rules for addressing teachers. Kids can use a first name as long as they place a Mr., Miss, or Mrs. in front of it, and of course a Sr. in front of it if the teacher is a nun. In her words, she said, 'Insist upon it. If they do it to you, then they'll do it to all of us. Don't take flippant answers. We must insist.'

Her second set of rules: No gum in school at any time. She said, 'God gave me a good smeller and I can detect bubble gum in any room. Make them throw it out. Insist upon it....'

Lunch duties then got assigned. One teacher was to go to the lunchroom, the other to the playground. There, boys were to stay on one side, girls on the other. Fighting was allowed to occur '... as long as there's no blood,' a rule restated on several more occasions.

The principal then outlined the daily schedule in the morning. There will be an 8:00 Mass; 8:30 or so there is breakfast for the children -- a free breakfast program for children who qualify, otherwise as much as 35 cents a meal. At 8:45 the school starts with the ringing of a bell. The teachers preside over the 8:00 Mass and they switch off in terms of responsibility every week or so. The children sit in the appropriate spots; upper grades sit on the right side of the church and lower grades on the left. One of the nuns brought up at this point that they should eliminate singing at the Mass because it will cut the time down to 20 minutes and make for a more efficient service. Somebody also brought up that funerals happen at these masses and prolong them and then everyone's late. A long discussion followed on the length if the particular priest's sermon, and how that could hold things up also. Everyone entered into the discussion at that point. Other smaller discussions broke out in different corners of the room and for all intents and purposes the meeting was subverted.

Sr. T. eventually regained control of the meeting, by reprimanding a teacher for talking while she was trying to make announcements. She did it with a sort of joking air.

She then explained about uniforms. The boys are to wear blue pants and a white shirt. There will be no penalties for breaking this rule until October 1st. Girls are to wear white, yellow, or blue socks, plaid skirts. No tennis shoes are to be worn except on gym days.

In the next part of the meeting, the principal finally got to talking about things that directly concern instruction. She noted that she had ordered new textbooks in math, English, reading, spelling, and also a new religion book. She noted that in the writing books and the religion books no one is to draw or write in the books because they are paperback and should be reused. Even in the writing books there should be writing on looseleaf paper....

The principal then noted how writing is important. The correct formation of the letters is important to emphasize. The Zaner-Bloser method should be used, and work day by day, drill and practice, should be emphasized. If teachers follow this particular schedule of daily practicing of handwriting, many things can be accomplished.

She then went on to say a that teachers should accept no messy papers from children. Grades 4 to 6 only use pencils until November 30, and then if they are neat

they can use pens. In the lower grades the teachers should be more patient, but there were, inexcusably, 'Some papers in upper grades I wouldn't feed to a pig.' All students in the school should use this heading: the name goes in the upper lefthand corner, grade below that, date in the righthand corner, subject below that, and specific assignment underneath that. Everyone agreed, all the teachers consented.

The final announcement was that papers were not to be torn out of spiral notebooks. Only plain, looseleaf pages were acceptable. This is throughout the whole school. One teacher remarked that the teacher's method of paper-keeping should be decided by the teacher. Smaller discussions began to break out in the room. The principal called for an end of the meeting with a prayer.

As you can see, there is little indication that the central Catholic school hierarchy is exerting a direct influence on the principal's policy measures. You can also see that the principal is the final arbiter of classroom discipline and management. However, it should be noted that over the course of the year, the principal seldom visited classrooms to see if her policies were being carried out.

At the next inservice meeting, we gave each teacher a description of the study, and told them of the intention to come into the classroom, take notes, and get to know students — but in ways that would not disturb regular activi-

ties. Although all the teachers appeared initially receptive, our strategy later became that of spending scheduled amounts of time only in classrooms where teachers were thoroughly comfortable with the researcher's presence.

Two classrooms were eventually studied intensively: 2nd and 8th grades. Both teachers were extremely comfortable in the researcher's presence, be it taking notes or communicating with students during breaks in the classroom routine. Unsystematic, much briefer observations were made in all other classrooms.

Establishing the Researcher's Role

Gold (1958) describes a continuum of possible roles in the field from that of complete observer to that of complete participant. Since the subjects were children, the role of complete participant was impossible. The role of complete observer, however, would have allowed no interaction with the children, severely limiting the richness of the data. Therefore, the middle classification, participant-as-observer, was chosen.

In this project, the role of "a responsible adult, separate from the school authorities, sensitive to and interested in children and their activities" was established and maintained by the researcher. The maintenance of this role was important on two accounts: (a) to prevent overidentification with children's interests ("going native"); and (b) to maintain emphasis on children rather than on adults (ethnocentrism). Burton (1977) notes that the latter problem is the most serious when studying the young, since it is easy to ascribe adult motives and rationale for actions and utterance of children

which, in fact, develop from a unique logic. It was important to take off the blinders of an adult's viewpoint, and think as a child would, for the purposes of communicating with the subjects of the study.

At all times the researcher identified himself as a researcher from the University of Delaware. Letters of introduction and reference were given to all participants at the site. Mere self-identification, however, was not enough. The principal, some of the teachers, and students had difficulty understanding what a university researcher was (see the section ahead on role), and therefore, at times, refused to accept his identity. Two months into the research, several of the 8th grade students decided he was a narcotics agent. This problem was eliminated over time as they discovered that no one got in trouble due to the researcher's note-taking. At the same time, the school was being critically written up in the newspapers over some controversial events which had occurred the previous year. The principal, eyeing the note-taking, then began to worry that the researcher was a newspaper spy. By showing his notes, the researcher was able to attenuate this problem to a degree, but final resolution did not take place until the principal became ill in March, and was permanently replaced. Trusting relations were immediately established with the new administrator, and still exist at this writing.

We tried to "give back" to the participants at the site, and thereby establish a sense of reciprocity, a necessary condition for full acceptance. For example, the researcher volunteered to monitor the 2nd grade center on many occasions, and sometimes substituted for the teacher. He also arranged to tutor some students, and took playground duty on occasion. One day he was summarily asked to clean up broken glass on the playground, and thus concluded

that his initial acceptance was established. By June of 1980, the end of the research period, he was accepted by all as "part of the woodwork."

This gave rise to a few new problems. As an adult within the site, he was expected to uphold the norms of the institution, the rule against gum-chewing, for example. If he enforced the rule, by notifying teachers or principal of infractions, he would have lost the trust of students, especially the 8th graders. A second problem concerned the rule of formal address -- "Mr. Mike." The researcher preferred an informal form of address ("Mike"), as enabling closer contact with students. In the eyes of the principal and the staff, the researcher was therefore not behaving as a responsible adult, but was fostering disrespect. Daily time at the site eventually remedied both conflicts. The hosts soon saw that the incidence of gum chewing and disrespect was independent of the researcher's presence.

Research Techniques

a. Observations. Observations were made on the activities of various groups Approximately two days of observation per week occurred over the school year.

Since the project was concerned with cognitive processes, the attentional aspects of social interaction were of special importance. The observer noted what the child socially attended to and how s/he behaved pursuant to the social stimulus. Interviews with the children involved in the interaction, when possible, focussed on the strategies used in the course of the interaction.

Notes and audiotapes were used to record observations and interviews. Although some objections have been raised to the use of tape recorded observations due to the effects on the respondent, Warren (1974) has found that the

apparatus, when monitored for bias, can be used as an effective data gathering instrument in the field.

b. Informant interviewing. Informant interviewing took the form of asking children how an activity occurred (usually in the researcher's presence) and why the child acted in such a manner. The development of such child informants was a key objective, since these interviews were the basis for describing the socio-cognitive strategies that children use.

c. Respondent interviewing. This was of two types: (a) sociometric-type questionnaires to assess group structure (Gronlund, 1959); (b) general interviews about strategies used in groups, as well as characteristics of these groups. Due to the open-ended nature of the research, exact content of these more formal interview sessions was not developed in advance.

Controlling for bias. Qualitative research gives some consideration to control of bias on the part of the observer, but does not seek to gather systematically information on specific biases. Such reactive effects were evaluated from other information sources, such as succeeding interviews with the same person, and interviews concerning the data received from other informants.

If there are large discrepancies in the data, something might have been missed due to faulty interpretation, signalling ethnocentrism. Going native was assessed by consulting with knowledgeable outsiders concerning observations, but this could also have led us away from a grounded theory of the organization.

Stereotypic ideas of children concerning adults as well as reactive effects also had to be accounted for (McCall, 1969). If a pattern of behavior

was observed, then the researcher ascertained by use of informants whether or not the pattern occurred in the observer's absence.

According to Piaget (1955), children's reasoning and language is qualitatively different from that of adults. The child will receive communication from the adult in a manner different from the way another adult would receive it. When interviewing child informants, it was important to assess the child's thinking and language, and to adjust information received accordingly. Piaget's method clinique of interviewing children provided a model.

Data Reduction & Analysis

All observations were dictated at the end of the day into a tape recorder, and later transcribed. Dictated observations were based on rough notes taken at the site. All formal interviews were also taped and transcribed. Over 2000 transcripted pages were collected over the course of the study. Three copies of each transcript were made for the purpose of security and analysis.

Transcripts were read thoroughly, and notes were made in the margins as to what each item signified. From marginal notes, a series of general categories were constructed to facilitate the analysis.

The general categories were as follows:

1. Characteristics of the school organization

2. Children's social organization

3. Neighborhood and Family Organization

4. Children's conceptions of school organization

5. Children's conceptions of peer organization

6. Children's conceptions of neighborhood organization

7. Children's conceptions of the workplace.

As you can see, our area of research broadened considerably over the course of the study. Only the first two headings will be discussed in this report. Other topics are in various stages of analysis and will be reported at a later time.

Each broad subject matter area was then broken down into subtopics. These often consisted of various characteristics on which children were thought to vary. Within each smaller category, age and sex comparisons were made.

Transcripts wer partitioned according to the general categories. Transcripts were segmented, cut up, and pasted onto 5 by 8 cards. Each card was marked with an informant or respondent code, its assigned main category and subcategory, source and date, and cross-classification information. We quite frankly were floundering in a sea of information until our consultant, John Ogbu, provided us with this useful and insightful technique.

Ecological Context

Southeast Plainfield is an integrated neighborhood existing within the corporate city limits. The area represents a unique cross-section of ethnic (Polish, Ukrainian, German, Lithuanian, etc.) and minority (native American, black, Hispanic) cultures. The neighborhood is approximately 25% black, with most of the population falling in the lower socioeconomic bracket. Southeast covers only a few square miles, yet houses over 30,000 residents, mostly in

small, six to eight room row houses which vary with respect to ownership and condition. The neighborhood contains elements of the urban slum as well as of a tough, ethnic, working class community. (See Appendix A.)

Southeast contains seven elementary schools within its approximate border. Schools were chosen randomly to approach for negotiation for entry. Using the initial criteria of (a) ease of entry, and (b) conditions conclusive to field work, one school — St. Angela's — was chosen for the project.

St. Angela's began out as the city's first free school in 1792. At that point it consisted of only one building, three blocks from its present position. Soon there were many new buildings. With the influx of Irish immigrants in 1840 and their hard-earned savings, St. Angela's parish was able to build not only a new church, but also an orphanage for stranded Irish children. This consisted of two buildings, one for boys and the other for girls. At the turn of the century, as more immigrants came into this part of town, the neighborhood became somewhat more stable. The need for an orphanage decreased, and the need for a school increased. At that point, the pastor sent for teachers from Ireland. The orphanage was then converted to separate schools for boys and girls on the high school level, and a school for both on the elementary level.

The high school and the orphanage were discontinued on financial grounds approximately 20 years ago. What is left today is only the parish and the elementary school. Both organizations have use of all the buildings.

The Neighborhood

The school faces West on a main thoroughfare bisecting an old business district. As one looks across this main street, one can see boarded up store

and liquor enterprises. Three doors south of the school is a restaurant reputed to be a hangout for prostitutes. Further to the south is the bar district of the city — the place where sailors coming into port generally spend their leave carousing and drinking. Still further to the south — but this is only 10 blocks from the school — is the waterfront.

Going north from the school, one finds some renovated housing as well as slum dwellings. Twenty blocks north of the school is the worst area of slum housing in the city.

East of the school, the area is made up of predominantly white Polish working class families. Some of these families have been there for 30 years, and remarkably have not moved for various reasons. They work in the industries on the east side of town, and are mostly Catholic.

All the houses in the school area are of the row variety. They have a width of no more than 13 feet, and share side walls. There are no front lawns. The backyards are usually cement, and are no longer that 30 feet. What this presents is an environment where there is very little privacy, and very little green grass or trees. A visitor sees the usual signs of urban decay, but later learns that the inhabitants have strong block and neighborhood ties, and consider closeness to be an advantage. Knowing everyone on the block is one of the adaptive strategies that a neighborhood child must learn.

Looking at the school, one is struck by its apparent discontinuity with the neighborhood, but this turns out to be a matter of its special heterogeneity. The sense of community described above varies widely from the working class home to the rundown row houses of the projects. Each neighborhood structure is small, particularistic and homogenous. The people on a block, or in a particular project building, are generally of the same social strata and

are stable over some period of time. Since the school draws children from all over this neighborhood, the school is therefore more heterogeneous than each block. The child coming from a homogenous block must learn to adapt to this heterogenous setting. This does not seem apparent at first until you ask some of the children about other parts of the neighborhood. Few of them know anything about the world beyond their three- or four-block territory. When asked about bus service to the northern part of the city, one 8th grader did not even know where the northern part of the city was — and this was one of the better students. Few of the students ever wander beyond their own neighborhood boundaries.

The school itself is trying to forge a sense of community in its children. The school organization and religious affiliation has the most direct ties to the particular family configurations and values of the white working class polish section. These people generally make up the parish as well. The major school discontinuity is therefore with the children who are not involved in the parish, or who have a different cultural background. Essentially, the school takes children from a wide variety of neighborhood settings, and tries to instill in them a common background based in part on the Polish working class heritage. This heritage does not include the X-rated books stores and the bars that are so prevalent in the neighborhood. So the school makes strict prohibitions as to where its children can congregate before or after school. For example, children are not allowed to stand in front of an X-rated bookstore. If they have been seen hanging around the restaurant which serves as a hangout for prostitutes, their behavior is reported and the principal reprimands them. The school clearly has a mandate to insulate and protect the children from aspects of this urban environment.

In summary, regarding the relationship between the neighborhood and St. Angela's, two things are apparent. First, the school, by virtue of its background, is most continuous and congruent with the working class blocks that exist east of the school. Secondly, the school tries to keep the children away from various parts of the neighborhood that it does not sanction, such as the seedier side of urban life. In doing so, it tries to become a safe place for the children to become inculcated with the values of the particular working class culture that it claims as its heritage. As a result, it replaces particularistic block sentiments with values that are somewhat more universal.

The Physical Plant of St. Angela's

As you approach the school from the main street, you see wrought-iron fences surrounding the church and the school. The front of the school building has some broken stained glass windows, and a big green door. That is the only entrance to the school. On the door as you go in there is a sign NO LOITERING, but on the front steps of the school one can nevertheless often find the alcoholics that roam this part of town.

To enter the school if you are not a child, you have to ring the buzzer that alerts the secretary. She opens the big creaking steel door -- after checking you out through a little window. You are allowed entry into the building only after some interrogation as to your purpose. Security is very important in the school.

When you first walk in the door, you see a very short hallway. To your left on the first floor is the library and a small office. To the right is

the kindergarten. Behind that is the third grade classroom a couple of empty rooms, and the teacher's preparation room.

There is a large wooden staircase that runs up from the front hallway. As you ascend the staircase, you come to the 2nd floor landing and find a classroom on either side. The building is essentially U-shaped, and you are at the bottom part of the U. The right wing houses the sixth and 8th grades: the left, fourth and fifth grades, plus some empty rooms and storage space.

There is a third floor, but this is off limits because of fire regulations: there are no proper exits from that floor. If you do go up there, you find that all the rooms are of the small cubicular variety. They used to be living quarters for the nuns who taught in the school. They are now used only for storage.

The main U-shaped building thus houses the library and administrative space, plus seven of the nine classrooms, and a great deal of unused space, much of which has not been deemed safe by various city inspectors.

Leaving the back of the main building, you go out onto the playground. As you look across it, you see the backs of row houses behind a large concrete wall. To the right is the Annex, so-called. It used to be one of the high school buildings. Now it houses three classrooms. First grade is on the first floor. Second grade is on the 2nd floor (up a steep flight of wooden stairs), and boasts two rooms. Another small room there was made available to us as a project office, though shared with speech therapists and other counselors.

To the right of the Annex is the church hall. This contains the auditorium, which is quite large, and which is where the children eat lunch. A

small kitchen is attached to it. Above the hall are more classrooms originally used by the high school, but closed off now for safety reasons.

Finally, to the right of the school hall, adjacent to it, is the church. It is of classic gothic design, and very large, given the rather small population that now attends it. This church was once the equivalent of a cathedral on this side of town, and its services would attract people from quite a distance. This is no longer the case. The pastor told us that most of the younger people, second and third generation Irish from this parish, have moved out to the suburbs and attend church there, leaving St. Angela's with the poor and the aged. The congregation is therefore representative of the neighborhood as a whole.

In summary, the actual physical setting confronts its users with many nooks and crannies an places not conventionally though of as off limits. There are many turns and angles to negotiate. It took the researcher the better part of three weeks just to figure out where he could go and where he could not go, and how to get from one classroom to another, since even the stairs and their layout are not where you might expect them to be. There is no apparent intuitively regular path to get from one room to the other.

Social Implications of the Physical Plant

The irregular layout prompts the teachers to come up with a relatively tight organization for ferrying the children from one particular place to another. The problem is most acute for the younger grades separated from the main building. When these teachers have to bring their classes to the main building, they not only have to navigate the children out of the annex, but

also have to get them in an orderly fashion across the playground and into one of the myriad rear entrances. The same thing is true for entering the church or the cafeteria.

Numerous social norms govern the use of spaces. For instance, a child is not allowed to go into the church, without an accompanying adult. Special permission is needed for any of the children to leave their classrooms and go into any other part of the building. Bypassing regulations, and getting into prohibited areas, sometimes becomes an end in itself. One of the goals of the emerging adolescents in 8th grade was to sneak up to the third floor and hide out or smoke. Particular nooks and crannies appearing at the intersection of, for example, the church and the school auditorium are off limits, but are used by the older children as places for private meetings. In fact all of the children eventually learn to use unique configurations of space for their own social purposes. The 8th graders regularly congregate around the porch of the church which afford them some privacy, although it is open on one side. because it is not readily visible from all points of the playground.

Finally, knowledge of the georgraphical setting influences the number of privileges that students can obtain from the school organization. For example, children who have attended school for along period of time are sent on more errands. That is usually attributed to their maturity, but it also has to do with the fact that they know precisely where all objects are located within all of the spaces. If a particular piece of equipment is needed from the 2nd floor of the church hall building, an older student is most likely to be called on to go and get it. A younger child may not even know of the existence of that church hall area. Even within the same age groups, however,

experience counts. Within the 2nd grade, children called on for most of the errands are the ones who have been there the longest and who know the geographic setting well.

Knowledge of the geographic layout is necessary for successfully negotiating both day to day routines, and also for gaining privileges and status within the school organization itself.

School Population

The school consists of 225 students, eight teachers, and various support personnel including a principal, a janitor, a secretary/librarian, a director of religious instruction who is also associated with the parish, five aides, and some cafeteria workers. The student body is comprised of 30% minority children, and most of these are black. In fact, 25% of the school population is black, and the other 5% minority consists of native Americans and Greek immigrants. The school population, compared to census figures for the area is representative of the neighborhood as a whole, with regard to minority composition. However, the Spanish speaking population of the school, though small, is on the rise, compared to the neighborhood.

The school staff is representative of the neighborhood. All the teachers and support personnel are white. A majority of the staff hails directly from the Polish working class, section alluded to earlier. For example, the 4th grade teacher has been at St. Angela's for 25 years, and has lived in the Polish neighborhood all of her life. The 5th grade teachers hails from a neighborhood slightly east of the one around the school, but comes from the same Polish working class background. The 6th grade teacher is also from this same neighborhood, and just recently came back and started teaching at the school.

All of the aides except for one are working class Polish, and live within the east side neighborhood.

The white student population shares the same background. Most of the white students live within the eastern part of the neighborhood, with a small proportion hailing from other parts of the city. Among the latter group are children from families that migrated up from the coal towns in West Virginia, and others who have assumed the migratory stance of urban city dwellers. All told, then, the school population represents the patchwork demographic picture of the entire neighborhood.

The Authority Structure of St. Angela's

The central Catholic office has no legal power over St. Angela's policies or curricula. Sr. T. is free to run it in any way she sees fit. However, all Catholic schools have agreed on some policies regarding discipline and permanent record maintenance. The parish church exerts some authority over the principal, in that the church provides a financial subsidy to the school — about 30% of its operating costs. This give the parish clergy a sense of themselves as school advisors. But the principal notes with pride, as do the staff in the school, that although the clergy have tried to control the curriculum, they have not succeeded in doing so. The principal has always prevailed in the end on matters of educational policy. The previous principal held out for open classrooms, a type of education that was in great disfavor with the clergy. The ability to resist both central office and parish clergy stems from the fact that the principal herself is part of a religious order.

The order is the main source of the principal's policy decision and authority. The particular order of nuns that runs the school is known as a

teaching order. That is, all of the religious in the community are committed to teaching as a way of support and occupation. Every religious has been trained as a teacher.

Since these nuns all live together in a community, educational policy is a topic of discussion throughout their entire life cycle — be it from morning to night, or over many years. Therefore, the order influences policy through the social norms that exist within the community. Since the order is characterized by its Roman Catholicism, policies and curriculum are formulated on the basis of their concordance with Catholic values, as well as their educational merit. For example, it is deemed that choir and church attendance is a necessary element of the school day. Since there is such a large non-Catholic contingent in the population (50%), participation in these events is not mandatory. But all students must take classes in religion.

Another component of the school authority structure are the parents. There is no formal parent organization (PTA), but the principal is intimately connected with a group of parents that, for all intents and purposes, serve the same function. This group consists of the aides and cafeteria workers and janitorial staff, all of whom may have now, or once had, children in the school. The principal regularly consults with this group to get feedback from the community on different issues. Their degree of embeddedness in the community is suggested by the following excerpt from an interview with one of the cafeteria workers who has a son in 8th grade:

Researcher: Mrs. R., where did you go to school?

Mrs. R.: St. Angela's.

Researcher: Can you tell me some ways that helped you in what you did later on in life?

Mrs. R.: well, my basic education there was really good because in arithmetic I was very good, and algebra and all, so that helped me (for an earlier job in a government office). I felt like I had gotten the basics, and that's what really counts.

Researcher: Is there anything you did that you can remember that gave Jack (her 4th son, now in 8th grade) a good start at St. Angela's — I mean did you walk him to school or anything like that?

Mrs. R.: Well the other one, Bob, was in 8th grade when Jack was in 1st grade, so there were three of them going, so they walked each other.

Researcher: So you think that helped Jack out, since all the other kids in the family were up there too?

Mrs. R.: Sure, because they went to school together, they weren't separated.

Researcher: Do you know many people in the school that you associate with?

Mrs. R.: Sure, at parties and things like that.

Researcher: I know you are up at school the time, and you seem to know all the teachers and the principal, because you work there too.

Mrs. R.: After the fourth one comes along, you get to know just about everybody... (And) of course there're some parents I went to school with there, I grew up with them, as well as a nun up there that I went to school with.

Researcher: How did you get the job at the cafeteria?

Mrs. R.: Well, whenever they have anything down there they would ask the mothers for help, like we would sell hot dogs and cake or something to make some money.... So when (my husband) had his heart attack and wasn't working, Sister had said to me, if they got in the lunch program there, would I be interested in working and I said yes. But at the time truthfully I didn't know I was going to get paid for it. I was just going to help out. Then when the lunch program came in, and Sister said I would get paid, well, that was an extra bonus.

Parents of this type do not consider themselves components of the authority structure, however. The school they see as being run by the principal and the faculty and the parish clergy. As Mrs. R. put it later, "I think it should be, and if you didn't agree with that you wouldn't send your child to

Catholic school." Nevertheless, the school faithfully represents the norms and values of working class families like the R's, and if the school deviated from them substantially, parents would at least exercise the power of pulling their children out.

Schoolwide Organization of Activities

Since the school is so small, there are very few activities participated in by all the children at any one time, but there is an overall sense of communal organization apparent the different classrooms. The children in the morning first come in through the playground for security and organizational reasons. The parents are not let in through the gate, only the children. This is done so that, as the principal once put it, teachers will not be bothered and can go about their daily work. The students do not enter in lines, they simply come in the gate, walk through the playground, and find their classroom. After putting away their coats and things the general pattern is that they sit down at their desks while the teacher takes care of organizational business such as collecting notes and taking attendance.

Activities then begin for the day. Midway in the morning, there is a break. The younger grades are herded to the lavatories, and then come back to the classroom for a snack. In the upper grades, the break consists of free time for students to mill around and talk to one another. In both cases, the break is between 10:15 and 11:00, and lasts no longer than 15 minutes. From break ending until lunch, instructional activities continue.

Lunch is one of the few school wide activities. It is handled in two shifts — first the younger grades (one to four), and then the older grades (five to eight). Within these two shifts, all children come down to the

lunchroom at the same time, eat together, leave the lunchroom, go to the playground and engage in various activities, and then go back to their classes. During the cafeteria period, they line up and buy their lunches, and then proceed to seats indicated by a teacher. The teachers tell the children where to sit, although the seating arrangements are not necessarily the same from day to day. After the children have cleaned up, the teacher gives each table a signal — meaning they can go outside. The children throw their garbage away and go out to the playground.

The playground is sex segregated, with the boys on one side and the girls on the other. There have been few complaints about this, even among the adolescents. If contact with the other sex is desired, the children have ways of initiating and sustaining it. For example, as a teacher's back was turned, a girl who wanted to play basketball went over to the boy's side and shot some baskets. Eventually two other girls joined her. Since there was only one teacher on duty, this all went unnoticed. The girls, however, were always on sharp lookout and were very aware of the teacher's position, and the likelihood that other staff members might be on their way outside. As soon as the trio caught sight of the principal entering the playground, they fled back to the girl's side. None of this seemed to bother them very much.

At the end of recess, the teacher on duty rings a bell. The children must stop wherever they are and keep silent. Amazingly, this rule is followed to the letter with no apparent sanctions outside of an occasional reprimand. With the ringing of a second bell, the children fall in line according to their classrooms. A teacher then leads each line back to its classroom for afternoon activities. The children put away their things, go to their seats, and the teacher, after making a few announcements, sets up the afternoon agen-

da. There is some additional instruction in the basic subjects, but mostly activities such as art, music, choir, and gym are pursued.

Interestingly, there is no written policy, nor any set of statements at the beginning of the year from the principal that this particular order of events should prevail in all the classrooms. Only the beginning and ending of the school day, and the lunch periods, are uniformly prescribed. Some activities are scheduled around the gym teacher. But in general, every classroom has a break at almost the same time in the morning, has a similar pattern of instructional activities — that is, reading and mathematics in the morning, and social studies, gym, music, and art in the afternoon — without any direct policy initiative from the principal. In fact, the principal particularly valued the fact that what the teacher did in her classroom was up to her as long as she kept control, and taught the prescribed curriculum. The teachers themselves chose to follow a common format.

Classroom Organization

In this section, we will focus on the internal organization of two classes that were selected for a developmental contrast — 2nd and 8th grades. The description will provide a background for the analysis of peer group structures in those two grades.

Organization of Second Grade

Second grade consist of 25 students, a teacher (Ms. C.), and an aide (Ms. B.). The classroom is located on the 2nd floor of the Annex, separated by the playground from the main school building. Children climb up a steep flight of creaky stairs to reach their class.

Second grade has two rooms — its regular classroom, and a Learning Center — left over, in both spirit and materials, from an open classroom policy favored by a previous principal. The new teacher, had received college training in learning centers, so was willing and able to keep the Center going. First grade presumably also has access to the Center, but has never been observed to use it.

Most of the materials in the Center consisted of games reinforcing basic skills in reading, spelling, and arithmetic. Many of these games were constructed by the aide, Ms. B., several years back. It sometimes appears, however, that only children already competent in the basic skills have access to the reinforcement. Ms. C. established the policy that children have to complete their basic classwork successfully before being allowed to go into the Center. Thus, children most in need of extra reinforcement sometimes failed to obtain it. As one child reported to the researcher:

> I just started going my work and Ms. C. was waiting. At first I didn't understand how to do our language so she said this is how we do our lesson. So she said do like they do. You match the word, they match each other like the compound word and then I had to copy my homework and it was almost close and I said I hope I get finished before close and I went in there and I didn't even get to do nothing and the next thing the Center was closed.

The researcher's notes from the first week in October indicate the social and academic character of Center participation.

I walked in the Center and asked Ms. B., the aide, how the room was set up. She said she had different activities planned for each particular child in this room, even though the room looks to be just...set up for children to do anything they wanted to do. All the games seem to be educational. I'd say about half of them are made by the staff.

I waited around the room for the children to enter. at 10:15, in came running Robert, Tom, and Bill. Bill was called out later by Ms. C. to join a reading group. I was standing on the window wide of the room watching the kids come in, right next to a table with a game board on it. The three boys sat down and started to play, and asked me if I would join, and I acquiesced. The three of us played the game. It was a modified version of parcheesi. Robert understood all the rules. There was a starting point for all of our little markers — we each had two markers. Robert told me that you had to roll a five in order to get out of your starting gate and proceed around the board. He seemed to also know that you could get a five in two ways: either by a combination of the dice, or five on any one single die. In that case, you could use the number on the other die as your move number. I couldn't tell if Tom understood the rules or not, but Robert explained them very well. He knew

all the ins and outs. We didn't run into a situation where the rules would be called into question....

After that game I went to where Beth and Nancy were playing puzzles.... Nancy tried to piece the puzzle together by using a strategy of finding corners, or 'ends', as she called them. It was a square puzzle and she only picked two ends at a time and then tried to piece together the middle parts. These puzzles also had another way of solving them: following the story line. There was a story printed on each one, and if you could follow the story you could piece the puzzle together. Neither child followed that strategy....

Kathy came over and started talking to me, eventually asked me if I wanted to play a game. I told her to pick one out. this particular game was a rummy-type game that consisted of 3-letter words, the initial letter on a set of cards, and the last two letters on a different set of cards, and you had to match them up. If you didn't get a match, you had to draw another card. It was surprising to note that the children didn't know...when a particular configuration was not a word. They could recognize familiar words, but they had trouble parsing out the nonwords. Without an adult there, someone who knew the nonwords, it's de-

batable whether or not they could actually play that game. At any rate, Kathy explained all the rules to me.

Tom came over and asked to play.... Tom had played this game before, but used none of the strategies, ending up with six cards at the end. I did glance at his cards. He had many, many that he could have used, but he kept drawing cards. I don't know whether or not this was because he didn't know words, or because he didn't know the strategy of the game....

At any rate, I seemed to have three or four floaters around me. Beth and Nancy, as soon as they saw us playing, took up a game next to us. There was a good crowd around the whole table of about six children.... Ms. B. noted that starting tomorrow she would assign the kids tasks, and split up the different groups. She noted that Don's group was especially raucous, and that she wanted to get them under control. Apparently there will soon be social structure imposed on this freeform setting.

Back in the regular classroom, desks were arranged in various configurations during the year, but most often the teacher had them arranged in a horseshoe shape, each row being about 3 desks deep. Each child was assigned a desk, but these assignments were periodically shuffled as a way of maintaining discipline. If Ms. B. or Ms. C. thought a child was getting too noisy in con-

cert with another child, those children were separated. A chronically noisy child was put into the rear of the room, isolated from others. As an excerpt from an interview with Ms. C. indicates, the teacher worked conscientiously to find ecological solutions to what she viewed as social problems.

Researcher: These desks have been arranged the way they are since September, right, for the most part?

Ms. C.: It's very funny that you'd mention that because I'm sitting here right now thinking of another arrangement to make. This arrangement is bad. At this point it's bad -- I think not so much the arrangement itself as they've been sitting among the same people long enough now that socially they interact with those people and they're having a good time. Especially the window side. More than anybody else that group socially is just blossoming in the last three weeks.... I have moved people, but I haven't moved the whole class, and that's something that is coming. It's been needed. It's just with everything else going on I haven't gotten to that. I told them today that there is going to be a surprise tomorrow and there is.

Procedurally, the day went as follows. Children entered the classroom at various times between 8:30 and 8:45, put their coats away, and sat down. A particular rule in 2nd grade was that they had to get their desks in order and

sharpen any pencils before the start of the day. At precisely quarter to nine, the teacher would stand up and offer a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance and then ask for any notes from what she called "the window side" of the room. The "window side" and "the blackboard side" were split roughly down the middle of the room. Ms. C. regularly used those designations as part of her organizational framework, so the children had to locate themselves as to which part of the room they belonged to. Ms. C. would regularly call: "Window side of the room, do you have any notes or anything to take down to the office?" These children would come up to her desk and give her notes, and then she would call for the blackboard side. After this, she would make any announcements that needed to be made and then language arts activities would commence.

Ms. C. would begin by calling for one of the reading groups to go into the back of the room, to a set of desks used exclusively for that purpose. Children in the group would move back with their reading books, a rule being that they were not allowed to open these books until the teacher told them to. Ms. C. would then go through a lesson, for example, a lesson on the difference between long and short vowels, and then the children would take turns reading aloud around the circle of desks.

This small group instruction time never lasted longer than about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, the aide was watching over the rest of the room, where the children were doing worksheets on such topics as distinguishing between action words and nouns. Usually two reading groups were scheduled between 9:00 and 10:15, when the universal break occurred, as described previously. At about 10:30, children who had finished their worksheets, and who were caught up in their reading, were allowed to go to the Center. Those children who were not finished had to stay in the classroom proper and continue work-

Some children also were scheduled for reading groups during Center hours. At approximately 11:00, Center activity and reading groups and worksheet assignments ended, and mathematics started. This was usually a brief lesson and a workbook assignment. The children were then charged with completing this assignment over the next half-hour, and anything they did not finish had to be done for homework. The Center was closed during math, but the children who finished early were generally free to socialize. At 11:30 lunch began, as described above.

The 2nd grade teachers used four main ways of sanctioning the children. The first involved a behavior-modification-type point system. A pumpkin (or a snowman, or a leaf, etc., depending upon the season) was placed on each child's desk. If the child misbehaved, the pumpkin was taken away. If a pumpkin stayed on a desk for the whole day, the child was given a check on a list hanging by the front door. Children who kept their pumpkins for an entire week were given a special prize. Children who kept their pumpkins for a month got an even better prize. As a rule, the children kept close watch on who were "pumpkin persons".

A second sanction was loss of Center privileges.

A third was banishment to a desk at the back of the room.

The final type was more subtle, and is best presented through a play-by-play description of the type of game Ms. C. favored. The children were often observed to play games like this. From the researcher's notes:

> At 1:58 the game is set up. It's a 'who can make it into the basket' type of thing. A variation on wastebasketball. The milk carton is set up in the

front of the room and 54 inches away from that a line is marked off by an eraser. The children have to stand behind the eraser and throw another eraser into the basket. If they make it, they get a point for their team. If they don't make it, they don't get a point and there is a penalty, in that someone has to ask them a math fact and they have to answer correctly or else they lose a point. These math facts are like subtraction and addition facts from one to ten. The person who asks the penalty question then takes the next turn. For Fran's team, she is first, and she makes a basket. Harry misses. Fred cheers both times and gets a reprimand from the teacher. Meg gets the penalty question. She asked 10 minus 2. Harry answers 8. Meg then misses. Ann gets the penalty question. She asks 10 minus three and Meg says 7. Tom gets the first penalty question on this particular series, but he just says 5. Ned misses and Robert gets the penalty. He says 3 plus 7 and Ned says 10. Jean is the next one and she gets it. Then Rose misses. Kathy gets the penalty. She asks 10 minus 8 and Rose replies 2. Robert is the next one and he gets it in. Everybody cheers. It is now three to zero in favor of the window side. I just realized that whoever is asked the penalty question doesn't necessarily take the turn. It's Bill's turn and he

> gets it. Robert gets yelled at by the teacher. She says, 'You're going to lose a point for your team.' She asks Tom and Fred to sit up straight. She says she can't call on them when they're not sitting up. Next is Mike's turn and he misses. At 2:04 the penalty question is asked by Ned — 10 minus 7. Mike answers 3. Nancy's turn next. All of a sudden Team 1 loses a point due to all their talking. It's from Robert and that part of the room. Nancy gets it at 2:05. Then Susan gets it and so it's now three to one. Tom misses it. The penalty question is by Fred. He says, 'Ten take away, um, can I do 12? 15?' 'Come one, Fred,' the teacher says. 'I'll give you a count of three.' Right at that point he says 10 take away 4. Ms. C. awards Team 2 a point, saying that Fred was too late with the question. Everybody on Team 2 says, 'See Fred?'.

A few months later, the researcher noted:

> The teacher still biases her name calling, her turn taking types of things in these games by calling on a certain number of children. It would be interesting in the next month to do some sort of quantitative count in terms of who gets called on the most in the class. I could probably name three or four.... There is a definite ranking given out by the teacher in the

> 2nd grade along dimensions of perceived intelligence and cooperation, ability to listen and follow directions. It's also an interesting fact that some kids get completely ignored because they're not at the bottom or the top of the status rankings.

The teacher's manipulation of "wins" and "losses", then, was a basic mode of classroom control.

Organization of Eighth Grade

Eighth grade consisted of 26 students, the teacher (Ms. A.) and an aide (Ms. L.) shared with a lower grade.

Ms. A. was not a Catholic. One consequence of this was sometimes faulty observance of both the letter and the spirit of certain religious customs. For example, she forgot special Catholic events, and ended up not having prepared her class for them, or being late. Several times during the year, when she brought her class into church, she was reprimanded (later, by the principal) for its unruliness. The children were slouching and whispering -- largely, as it turned out, because Ms. A. had forgotten to separate the boys from the girls, as had been done in the past. As she later described it to the researcher:

> When I first came here I took the kids to church. I just lined them up and sat them down as they came. They were supposed to sit boys in one section and girls in another. It just seemed really crazy to me. I remember when I first took them, they were kind of

> confused about the way I was taking them. They were used to the boys in front, and then the girls, and then the teacher. I got really annoyed because they kept saying they couldn't sit there.

In addition, Ms. A. allowed her students to make their own tea, and thus have beverages within the room at certain periods, notably during the morning break, and sometimes even during class. This was not done anywhere else in school, and was particularly frowned upon by the principal and by the 7th grade teacher, Sr. M.

Ms. A. also had a radio/stereo combination that was for recreational rather than instructional purposes. There were very few items within the school that existed just for recreation. The player was eventually tolerated by the rest of the teachers, but it was never condoned.

Finally, Ms. A. dressed casually, sometimes even wearing jeans, and when she was displeased she used the same swear words permitted in the class. The class had agreed to permit "damn" and "shit", but no others. There were no reports that any of the other teachers, much less the principal, knew about that.

With one exception, the 8th grade followed the general school routine. The exception was that from 9:00 to 10:15, the entire 8th grade moved to the 7th grade room for mathematics and science. Here is a description of some events during that period:

> The task is on different notations for multiplication using brackets. The example Sr. M. puts up on the board is 2 x (3 x 5). She asks, 'Can it be 2 (3 x

5)?' About 15 hands show no. One boy in front of me says yes and the rest are silent.... The task moves to the workbook session. It is to read the number in the book and then add one to it. Sr. M. goes around the room systematically. First person is Alice. She can't read 189,999. Everyboy's hand is raised. Sr. M. picks Edwin and he reads 190,000. One of the kids in the circle used 'and' when reading the numbers, such as 50,000 and 99. Roland perks up and notes that the boy used 'and.' Sr. M. then told the boy that the use of 'and' connotes a decimal point. Sr. M. then corrects the boy for using 'hunnert.' She says, 'Don't slide, say hundred.' He does it again and again and the class laughs. The next person is Michael and the task changes to reading a number and then subtracting 1, telling the number that comes before it. The problem is 4,700. Michael says, 5,800. Then 300. Sr. M. asks him what comes before 700 and he says 600. Then she says, 'Well, what comes before 4,700?' He answers 300. Michael's next guess is 6,900 and his next guess is 1,000. Sissy says something to him and Michael says, 'Shut up!' and looks upset. Finally, Sr. M. counts up from 4,690 to do it for him. He finally gets from 4,699 to 4,700. Michael gets 1,000,000. He said 900,000, then he guesses, 9,999 and then 999. Sr. M. finally gives the answer

> 999,999. Michael repeats 9,999 anyway. Sr. M. demonstrates at the board by writing the result and adding one, when the operation actually required is subtraction. While doing this, she says, 'One and nine is ten, carry one.' Since the number is 999,999 this is done six times. The whole class chants the answer each time she says 'Carry one.'

At 10:15, 8th grade came back to their own classroom for their break. This essentially was a free time to talk to friends. From 10:30 or so until lunch, language arts and social studies were conducted, although this was variable. Sometimes social studies was carried on into the afternoon. After lunch, the afternoon was divided into two segments. First, in their own room, was either reading or social studies. After that, they moved to the 7th grade room for religion and art. Sometimes gym was also scheduled for the afternoon, outside with an undergraduate in a local college physical education program. He was a former student at St. Angela's, lived in the neighborhood, and knew all the children well.

The following final excerpt from the researcher's 8th grade notes provides the flavor of the afternoon session, and also introduces some individuals who are important to later sections of this report.

> I entered the 8th grade at about 1:30. The teacher was at the front of the room to the right of her desk, in a chair. The aide was sitting at the desk. They were involved in a newspaper task where the students had to take the daily paper, cut out a sports article,

and then answer some question on what it meant to win and lose, and whether or not the event was reported accurately. Ellen gets up to ask a question concerning the article, then Carrie gets up, and they're sitting behind each other. They are the only two people that ask questions. They are also two of the better students....

Suzanne comes in and says that the principal is asking for Jack and Louise to run some errands and two other people. Ms. A. names Bob and Patrick to go. I am sitting in the rear next to Albert. David walks by and Albert says, 'Hey Dave, I hit the numbers last night in the lottery.' Albert pulls out the tickets and explains how he got $25 on a $5 wager, and shows the numbers....

At this point Maria and Sarah are sitting in the same desk together. These desks are not designed for two people. They are doing the task but I don't see the newspaper on the desk. They seem to be using some kind of colored pencils to do something. John comes over and borrows some pencils, goes back to his seat, then comes over and exchanges some pencils for another set. This all happens for about a sixty second period. Maria and Sarah are sitting there, going through their papers together quietly. Maria then

holds up the paper. Sarah then takes out a pencil case and puts all the pencils away. Lucy then hands a calculator to Sarah and Sarah is looking it over. Ms. L. then says 'Where are you all supposed to go this afternoon?' Maria doesn't shout it out, but says, 'I'm going to heaven.' Sarah coughs, and laughs. Over on the other side of the room Chrissy is around her friends. She seems to have finished. She is making little Christmas presents. Carefully wrapped little boxes with ribbons. I don't know if they are actually presents or if they are for the bulletin board. The afternoon regularly is appropriate to bulletin board activity. Then there is an argument between Luella and Chrissy. Luella is parading around the room, quietly, but wandering around on her own accord, while there is a discussion between the teacher and the rest of the class about where to go and what to do this afternoon. Nobody seems to know. Luella yells out, 'Just send all of them over to Sr. M's class.' Then John says something, and she says, 'John, I wish you'd shut up and stop.' Ms. L. leaves to find out exactly what is going to happen. Luella moves to the back of the class and says, 'Chrissy, you know where the erasers are at? John, mind your business.' I couldn't hear John say anything. It seemed like Luella was just picking on him. Then a large amount of

conversation breaks out across the room. Carrie and Ellen. Ms. L. then enters the room again and says, 'Five of two, choir in Sr. M's room.' She then notices all the newspapers all over the floor due to the cutting task. She says to the entire group, 'Do you keep your home like that? Cutting up paper and leaving it on the floor?' The whole class responds no. Ms. L. moves to the back of the room and through the door to her little section in the rear of the room. During this time Ms. A. is telling the kids that they had better keep quiet because they are going to get an assignment and it's getting near to five of two. A social studies assignment is given out. It is to read a certain section and make up five questions. Ms. A. says, 'You may start on it now if you like.' Pat and Luella are talking to each other. Luella has come to the back of the room and is now sitting next to Chrissy in her desk. Lucy, who is in the seat in the upper right hand corner next to Luella, says, 'What unit was it?' And Luella says, 'Why don't you look at what you did last night? You're so stupid. If you look at what you did last night you can figure out what the next unit is from that.' Then Chrissy raises her hand and asks Ms. A., 'What unit is the spelling test on tomorrow?' The teacher says, '4-3.' Chrissy says to Lucy, pointedly, stupid.

Luella then goes over to Maria at the righthand tackboard and puts up the ribbon curled up that she and Chrissy were working on. The class is involved in making bulletin boards again.... It is now 1:50. Suzanne comes back now and sits in front of Chrissy and reports on her conference with the principal. All of a sudden Carrie and Carol and Luella also come over and listen. Luella then exits back to the bulletin board (rear righthand) and starts looking at the high school papers that are posted there. Now Suzanne moves to the front of the room and reports to Maria. She says something to Maria and Maria gets real upset. Suzanne goes back to Luella and Luella says, 'You know she'll start crying.' Suzanne goes back to Maria and makes a consoling gesture and gets the cold shoulder. At that point the principal enters the room and starts talking about choir. After the principal exits, Luella gets the broom and starts to sweep. At 1:55 the choir starts out. About half the class is left and the teacher starts to take roll to find out who is here and who isn't. Luella is sweeping in the back of the room by now. She says 'Everything I sweep, I keep, unless somebody claims it.' As she sweeps Pat's pen from underneath the desk. Pat turns around and gives her a questioning stare. Luella passes along, leaves the pen out in the middle of the room where the

rest of the trash is. As soon as Luella is gone, Pat gets out of her desk, picks up the pen, and reclaims it. Luella goes up the next aisle, comes down that same aisle. Sarah is in the way. She says, 'I'm going to sweep through you if you don't move.' Sarah points out that there is enough room. Luella, with one large sweep, pushes everything into the back of the room. Whole sections of the newspaper. Sarah has papers and the calculator on her desk. She gets up off the floor and out of her desk then. She asks the teacher if the board can be erased and Ms. A. says okay. Harry is called to the teacher's desk. 'How did you get these answers?' Suzanne is sitting in the aisle in front of Harry. He goes over to her and Ms. A. says, 'This is shit, pure shit. You have <u>un</u> means under or below.' I think he was supposed to define UN like United Nations. She says, 'When you want to do it right, okay.' Harry comes back and as he raises his foot up he hits Suzanne on the head with his foot. Suzanne reacts sharply. She is in the aisle, casually cleaning her desk out and reading. There is really little reason for her to be there. Herbie, a 7th grader, then gets up to sharpen his pencil. The teacher says, 'Pencils are not sharpened at this time. You're supposed to do that at homeroom in the morning.' Luella and Chrissy now join Sarah erasing the

board. Chrissy puts the presents she's been making on the chalk ledge....

Sarah and Luella then decide to wash the board. Luella writes her name with a damp cloth on the board and then washes it. Sarah preceded all of this by going out for a bucket of water without asking anybody. Louise is still gone on an errand. Chrissy is now handing out assignments that were completed and checked, I assume. Now Sarah brings the sponge back and Luella has one too. Both are washing individual desks. Karen is called to the desk and the teacher says, 'Where did you get these answers?' The same kind of thing goes by, but her work is not called shit. Suzanne comes by, says hello, goes over to the right rear board, and looks at all the papers. Luella and Chrissy come back directly behind my desk and take down the rear bulletin board.... Ms. A. was then called to the office by the principal. This is about 2:15 or so. Sarah was in and out getting water. in fact she had spilled a great deal of it in front of the board before the teacher left and Ms. A. noticed this puddle of water on the floor and made some kind of reference to urine and that it had better be cleaned up and where was Sarah and Sarah wasn't there, and that it had better be cleaned up by the time she got back. Sarah did enter the room about 10 minutes

later and Luella and Chrissy both got on her case to clean up the water. There was group conversation during this whole time. Three people in the back of the room were engaged in loud conversation, but there were at least three times when they exhorted the rest of the group to keep quiet, in particular the 7th graders. They talked about how they couldn't keep quiet and how their 7th grade president should have been trying to keep their group quiet, and how they were stupid, and how they looked like little babies. Luella made several references to their immature appearances. They also talked about Albert being from Italy and this was in the context of the 7th graders being so stupid and some particular kids being held back a couple of grades and how nobody learned how to read and write and how are these kids going to end up being in the job market or elected offices or even in class offices without being able to read.... The choir group comes back and there is a lot of commotion. Somehow Harry ends up with a Kick Me Please sign on his back. He goes up to the teacher and gives some kind of assignment to her. On his way back Ms. A. notices the sign on his back and demands that whoever did it come up with some kind of explanation or apology. Suzanne is engaged in sweeping the floor. The whole room gets silent. Suzanne then volunteers

> that she in fact put the sign on Harry's back. Ms. A. demands that she go make an apology to Harry. Suzanne drops the dustpan, makes a loud noise, and doesn't exactly stomp back to where Harry is, but moves to the back of the room rather quickly, takes the sign off his back, crumples it up, gives it to him, shakes his hand and, says, 'I'm sorry,' very briefly and quietly. You can just about make it out. Then she goes back, picks up the broom and starts sweeping again. The rest of the class gets itself together and goes back to its normal routine of discussion.

To conclude, we have described the milieu within which the peer network functioned at two grade levels. It can be seen that there were many opportunities for children to interact with one another, to learn about the costs and benefits of associating with one another, and to experiment with social formats — despite the fact that St. Angela's is a traditional parochial school.

Development of Peer Grouping

In this section, we will discuss the evolution of the peer structure from 2nd to 8th grades. As a preview of our findings it can be noted that peer groups as such were not found at the 2nd grade level. Instead, we found only overlapping pairs of friends. Peer groups were found at 8th grade level, and the reasons for their emergence will be discussed. In general, the two main formative factors were cognitive development and ecological pressure.

Teacher-Organized Groups

Upon entering the school, we were impressed with the number of groups present at any time of the day. The classroom itself was a formal group within the wider school organization. Within the domain of the classroom, other associations existed. The teacher organized the students in many ways: there were subject matter groups (i.e., reading, math, etc.), ability groups, procedural groups ("Row 1 may now stand in line to go to lunch"), cafeteria seating groups ("These students must eat at table 4"), and extracurricular groups (drama club, the track team, etc.), to name only a few.

Students also formed groups not influenced by the teacher — networks of friendships that were bounded and that regulated social interaction. The school never required the children to form these groups. In fact, when they noted a peer group, they set out to control it.

One of our goals was therefore to describe the complex relations between the formal classroom groups, and informal peer networks.

Our initial research questions were the following (a) What is a peer group, and how do peer groups change with age in the classroom? Do they become more formal or remain loosely structured? (b) If peer organization does

evolve with time, what processes are responsible for this change? (c) How is the development of the peer group related to the larger school and classroom organization?

Descriptive accounts of the 2nd and 8th grade at St. Angela's provided the raw data for answering these questions.

What Constitutes A Peer Group?

What do we mean by the term peer group? some theorists define a group as those who reciprocally name one another as friends on a sociometric questionnaire (Moreno, 1960; Hallinan, 1980). Others are skeptical of the sociometric questionnaire's validity, and insist that a group must be measured using behavioral and social interaction measures (Bales, 1950; Gottman & Parkhurst, 1980). Social psychologists, on the other hand, define a group as more than a network of associations (Sherif, 1954). For them, groups exist only if shared attitudes and norms exist. Sociologists, particularly exchange theorists, think that a group's function (e.g., a work group) determines its formation and structure (Homans, 1951). According to functionalist theory, groups should form when they are profitable. If a job can be done more efficiently by a group than by an individual, the group will form.

Symbolic interactionists, such as Berger and Luckman (1967), define groups as social constructions. According to these theorists, groups do not exist separately from people's mental representations of them. We, as outsiders, can note the interactions, associations, and shared attitudes. This matters little unless those observed actually define themselves as a particular type of group. Symbolic interactionists say that the meaning people give to social organization is the defining characteristic.

Our definition of the term group has five aspects.

1. A group is a set of persons with sharei beliefs and attitudes.

2. The members constitute a bounded, stable system.

3. This system can be observed via common activities recurring behavior patterns, and sometimes public symbols.

4. A group must be functional for some environment over and above any adaptation by individuals.

5. A group can be said to exist only if the individual members are able to characterize their activities as such.

An initial problem is to determine when the foregoing conditions have been met. Any dyad could meet the conditions, yet that dyad might be conventionally described as a friendship. Compared to friendships, groups have organization and public identity. Although friendships may be publicly affirmed (for example, in the marriage ritual), these symbols are limited to the private domain. For a friendship to exist, it is not necessary for it to be proclaimed publicly (Sennet, 1978).

Peer Organization in the Second Grade

What kinds of groups existed in the 2nd grade? In general, the type of group specified under our working definition was not found within this classroom. Instead, there were overlapping sets of friendship pairs which only approximated a formal group.

The friendship pairs in the 2nd grade had four distinct characteristics. First, they were sex stratified. Second, few recurring sets of friendships

existed. Third, friendship relations were characterized by a linear status hierarchy. And finally, personal associations tended to be context dependent.

Sex stratified groups. All friendships within the 2nd grade were between children of the same sex. Mixed-sex activity seldom occurred. Boys and girls were generally required to play on separate parts of the playground. Even when they wandered into each other's territory, they spontaneously kept a sex-segregation rule in force. The girls did not want the boys around, and chased them away.

Ann: All the time the boys come down here — that's the girls part and Lisa tells us to, um, chase them up there, and we do, and they run.

While within-six group activities included organized games, cross-sex activities were limited to brief chases on the playground.

Researcher: Now what about you and Todd on the on the playground. Do you every play with Todd?

Nancy: Uh-huh. Me and Lisa always chases him around an' all, all over the playground.

Furthermore, when the lunch seating was determined by free choice over a set of four tables, boys and girls never chose to sit together.

The children described their relationships in a similar manner. When we asked what friendships existed in the class, all of the children responded with a sex-stratified account.

Ned: All the girls all stick together, everyone of them are a group.

Researcher: Like all of them are a group?

Ned: Like Lisa, everybody's with Lisa. Everything she does they do. They always stick together.

Researcher: Is it all the girls?

Ned: Uh-huh.

Dee gave a similar account of the boys.

Researcher: What are some of the groups of friends in your classroom?

Dee: Beth, Nancy, Ann, Jean and Tanya.... Ned and Don and Ed and John and Robert and Alan and Mike and a lot of the boys in my class.

There was an exception to this system of sexual stratification. One boy and girl, Beth and Ned, had the only cross-sex friendship. This was not surprising, since they were similar in many ways. Both students were of high status. Each was at the top of the academic rankings within the class, and each was clearly the most popular. This status was so pronounced that most of the children looked up to both of them and considered them friends. The 2nd grade teacher noted:

Ms. C.: I have never seen this before in a school. I have never seen where a child is so favored over all other children by his own peers that they'll fight to be with him.

Researcher: Ned?

Ms. C.: This is Ned.

Ned liked to chase Beth and her friends. However, this friendship never existed outside of the chasing behavior. The two rarely communicated with each other in class, on the playground, or in the lunchroom. No one ever reported that they met outside of the school situation to play. Their families were not interrelated. But there was a rudimentary attraction: Beth and her friends considered Ned "cute." This suggests that their friendship may have been an imitation of male/female sex roles.

This stands in contrast to the sophisticated cross-sex friendships that existed in the 8th grade that will be described in a later section.

Friendships. The highest level of organization among 2nd graders was the friendship pair. The students did not exclusively associate with any stable subset of classmates. When asked about friendships in the class, student responses varied greatly. No two students agreed as to who was friends with whom. Friendships existed, but groups did not.

Children did not form spontaneous work groups within the classroom — although they could have especially in the center. As the teacher commented:

> The Center room I don't think is a place where they actually show a great amount of socializing. Whoever is available to work with them is who they'll work with. It doesn't necessarily mean they are their best friend. There are some -- there are Beth and Ann and Nancy type things — but then you also have the rest of the kids who are very willing to work with each other.

This undifferentiated organization existed on the playground as well. Beth and Nancy may have been best friends, but they intermixed and played with all of the other girls. On observing the playground games, we noted the regular switching of partners and participants. For example, all of the girls participated in "monster" games on the playground, where some girls were the monster who chased all others. Participation was never limited to certain sets of friends.

When we asked the children to name their best friends and other friendships beside their own, no stable pattern emerged. At first, children said that everyone was friends with everyone else, and that there were no exclusive relations.

Ann: Tanika, ... she's like me, I have my whole class of friends.... Beth, she has the whole class for friends. Everybody has the whole class for friends. Everybody likes everybody.

Researcher: Are Beth and Nancy your best friends?

Ann: Yeah, but the other kids are still my friends too. Beth and Nancy are the best friends I can think of.

Note the reference to <u>thinking</u>. It is possible that this hints at the pairwise cognitive capacities that Piaget refers to in his analysis of the development of seriation abilities (Hallinan, 1980).

Nancy: I'm friends with everybody in the class.

Ned: All the girls stick together, everyone of them are a group.

Researcher: Like all of them are a group?

Ned: Like Lisa, everybody's with Lisa, everything she does they do. They always stick together.

The children did affirm that they had best friends in the classroom. However, the friendships tended to be non-reciprocal. There were few mutual choices. Each student named different students as being best friends.

Researcher: Who are your friends at St. Angela's?

Nancy: Beth, Ann, Dee, Ned.

Ann: (asked to count her friendships): We have Jean, that's one, Nancy, that's two, me, that's three, Dee, that's four, I mean Tanya, that's four, and Rose, that's five.

Researcher: Who are your friends at St. Angela's?

Dee: Well, there's Meg and Kathy and sometimes Ann and Beth and Nancy and I can't think of anybody else.

The boys exhibited a similar pattern.

Researcher: Do you work with friends at all?

Robert: Well sometimes, like most of the time Johnny and Alan is the ones that like me, Johnny and Alan we still be working and like we tell each other what we on and what we doing....

Ned: Bill and Mike, they are always together.

Researcher: Who are your friends at St. Angela's in the 2nd grade?

Ned: Don and Alan.

The children did not identify a distinct network or group. They could only identify overlapping pairs of friends. These pairs never ccalesced into stable groups at any time.

The nature of the 2nd grade social structure was also exemplified by the relation of children who were socially marginal.

Ms. C.: Meg...has a devil of a time getting somebody to work with her. She'll come over to me over and over again and say, 'I don't have a partner. I don't have anybody.' Then I look around the room and see who else is kind of drifting and I'll say to her specifically, 'Meg, go ask Nancy.'

Not having a partner did not mean exclusion, as it would have if a group coalesced against an isolate. Meg and Nancy worked together comfortably even though they had different best friends.

The status hierarchy. Although there was no group of tight, stable relationships, a hierarchical structure was present in each sex group. This structure had two characteristics. First, it was linear. In the hierarchy, one or two occupied the top position, while others had middle or lower status. Second, the structure led to conflict among the classroom members.

The teacher noted that status rank in the classroom was based on popularity. Popularity, however, was an ambiguous term, and did not adequately explain the process by which a student became well liked.

High status was associated with academic performance, leadership ability, and having at least one good friend. Each sex group had one high status position. These were held by Ned and Beth, respectively. The teacher explained how the first two characteristics made Ned attractive to other class members:

> Ms. C.: To the extent that Ned is the favorite person is what bothers me when I watch the whole group. I don't know if it's been because he was such an underdog last year. If that caused this support to come, the combination of having all this praise and then all of the sudden, boom! Ned's a natural leader. He's very mature; he's not a trouble-maker. He doesn't fight. I can see why they latch on to him.

Ned was acknowledged as the smartest of the boys, and had a strong friendship with Don, who also performed well academically. One striking accomplishment of Ned's was the fact that he began "clubs" among the boys. Almost overnight, a single 7-yr-old organized a disparate group of other boys.

We shall detail the genesis and structure of these "clubs" later in this section. Note here only that these "clubs" were not groups according to our definition.

Beth had the best classroom performance among the girls. She finished more in the reading series than anyone else over the course of the school year. Beth had a strong friendship with Nancy. Beth was the boss of the girls. After Ned introduced the club concept, Beth began to organize one of her own.

Ann: Beth has told us and she has each name of the club we're in right? Beth calls the numbers, if Beth calls their names and they're not coming then they're out of the club because they have to come straight to Beth. Beth's the boss.

Researcher: Beth's the boss.

Ann: Right.

Researcher: I'm still having a hard time understanding all of this.

Ann: You have Jean, Tanya, me, Nancy and Rose. That's five people.

Researcher: Uh-huh.

Ann: And Beth's the boss. She owns the club, I don't.

Researcher: Oh, she owns the club. Why does she own the club?

Ann: Because she thought of it in the first place.

We also observed Beth's leadership on the playground. When the girls played "monster," Beth decided who would be the chasers. Her role of boss was acknowledged and accepted by all of the 2nd grade girls on the playground.

As there were leaders, there were also outcasts. Although the two leaders were the better academic students in the class, marginal status did not depend on academic performance entirely. Two girls, Meg and Dee were both good students, yet occupied lower positions in the status hierarchy. The teacher described the phenomenon.

Researcher: Those two kids are actually alone, and they're not connected.... I though Meg might be part of a network here.

Ms. C.: She's very much on the fringe, don't you think? If I had to draw a diagram I would put her over in a corner all by herself. There's a spattering of interaction with Dee or Stella.

Researcher: I wonder why she doesn't fit in. She seems to be bright, does her work well. Seems to do well in class.

Ms. C.: She does. She's a bright kid. you know, I wonder about this perfectionist attitude, if it has something to do with it. Both of those

> children to some extent are perfectionists. They expect much of themselves and they expect to get everything right. They don't like to get things wrong. That upsets them. Maybe they see in the other kids what they don't want to do themselves and that kind of makes them a little more hesitant to go on and be a part of the girls because if I'm with the girls and they don't do things right then I'm not doing things right either.

Stella and Fred presented different cases. She was a new student, difficult to have in class (according to the teacher) and was ignored by the other children. Stella told us that she didn't have any friends, save for one person (Meg), and that none of the kids liked her. She talked with everybody, and joined some of the playground activities, but in general was ignored by both sexes. Stella had none of the qualities for entry to high social status in the 2nd grade.

Fred was disliked by all of the students except for a few other low status boys. He was "trouble" for the teacher and was shunned by his peers. Looking for attention, he would run up to others on the playgound, and punch at them or yell something nasty. The other children would then report the bad behavior to the teacher. Fred would then be punished, and the cycle would repeat itself. Low status in the class helped perpetuate a vicious cycle. Fred was eventually suspended on two occasions, and was expelled near the close of the school year.

Although the 2nd grade status hierarchy was linear, not everyone was ranked. A few had high status, a few low status, but the bulk of the classroom remained undifferentiated. The majority of the class competed for the favor of its "bosses." Different winners would surface each day.

> Ms. C.: Ned is the favorite child in the kids' eyes. He's almost the epitome of everything that they ought to be. I don't know. All the kids will fight. Boys and girls alike will fight to be beside him in the line, beside him at lunch, to play with him in his group. They get upset with each other when one will exclude the other, you know, like when Don and and Ned and Alan and the boys are working in the Center room or on the playground or coming in for lunch and one will push the other one out. Bad news! They get upset and they'll push each other and they'll fight. They don't fight with Ned, but with each other to be the favorite.

Instability of the relationships. Associations in 2nd grade were context-dependent. Friendships formed around activities, and were not stable over time or place. This was the reason for lack of a clearly defined status hierarchy, and nonexistence of groups. The teacher comments:

> Ms. C.: Usually the other times that I've seen them, they might form groups of two or three, but then they're not permanent groups. They're together

> for a while and then one or the other will drift on to another child and into another group of friends.

On the playground, pairs of children tended to play together. Except for Fred, individuals were seldom excluded from an activity. Meg would play with Ann for part of the time, then jump rope with Beth or Nancy, the wander about by herself.

"Clubs". The contention thus far has been that the 2nd graders were not organized into corporate peer groups. In the spring of the school year, however, a series of curious events occurred which could have contradicted this analysis.

In April, we observed a number of boys exchanging pictures they had drawn. All of the pictures were similar. Representations of "superheroes" and other cartoon characters were passed around. They boys talked about forming a club around the exchange of these pictures. Several days later, the teacher mentioned that a "club," called "The Wanderers," had indeed formed. This apparently began as an imitation of teen-agers in the film, The Wanderers, which Ned had seen recently with his parents. The "club" was not a response to any classroom requirement.

Ned, Don, Alan, and some other boys of relatively high status were members of the "club." Ned explained how the "club" got organized.

> Ned: See, cause the whole class, see I made a club, put all these names in there and anybody who wanted to do it, and everybody else started making up clubs. Like Disco club, the boys made like Dragons and Demons, the Warriors.

Ned appeared to have formed a stable, bounded group, not tied to any particular context. If so, the Wanderers should have remained together in the lunchroom, on the playground, and in the classroom. This was not the case. With the exception of the friendship nucleus of Ned, Don, and Alan, the "club" remained an amorphous social entity. Rather, "clubs" were copies of adult grouping activities that the children could not fully assimilate. One joined a "club" only because of the activities associated with its name not because it had any special function in the classroom or the neighborhood.

Researcher: What were some of the other clubs?

Ned: He has like his club. He asked me but I said no. I don't like them guys -- the Kiss club (a rock group).

Here we thought Ned meant that he did not get along with the kids in the Kiss club, but...

Researcher: Why don't you like them?

Ned: I don't know, cause, they just sing terrible.

Ned was not referring to the other children, but to the rock group itself, from which the social organization was copied. Hence, the "club" had the appearance of a formal organization, yet was completely dependent on singular imitated actions for its rules and attitudes. The Wanderers "hung out and looked cool," the Kiss members liked rock groups, and so forth.

A student was a member if s/he liked the things the "clubs" imitated. It was not necessary to be special friends with anyone in "club" in order to join.

The "clubs" also appeared to be bounded, with rules for membership and participation. Ned and Don made membership cards and kept lists of "club" members.

Researcher: How did you decide who to let in the club?

Ned: They asked everybody who wanted to be in there was in.

Researcher: Why wasn't Mike in it?

Ned: He didn't want to be in it.

This could have been just a way of excluding Mike. However, the open nature of "club" membership was also noted by others.

Researcher: I thought best friends were all together in a club and I don't understand how one best friend can be in one club and you can be in another, and still like each other.

Ann: You're still best friends. Like if I'm in Beth's club--no, if I'm in Dee's club and Kathy's in Beth's club we're still best friends.

For Ann, as Ned, "club" membership was not tied to friendship, but to activity. For the girls, "clubs" formed around their "boss," Beth, for the purpose of playing during recess. This was functionally indistinguishable from non-"club" play activities. The children were experimenting with a form of social organization which they observed in the world around them. As we shall see from older children's accounts, this early attempt at assimilation of so-

cial forms was an important prerequisite for the appearance of true peer groups in adolescence.

Summary

The groups which existed in the second grade were sex-stratified overlapping pairs of friendships. A linear status hierarchy existed based on academic achievement and teacher approval. The students on the lower rungs of the status hierarchy competed for the attention of those at the top. The children exhibited strong tendencies to organize socially, but could only imitate pieces of various adult grouping models. The models were assimilated to the children's previous play activity.

How did this assimilation presage the organized peer group? For this, we must look at the structure and function of groups in the 8th grade.

Peer Organization in the 8th grade

The associations of students in the 8th grade were remarkably different in form and function from that of the 2nd grade. We were struck by the existence of groups from the first day of observation in the classroom. From research notes on the first day of school:

> For convenience sake, I classified the 8th graders into three groups. All of the boys sat in the left front seats. One group of girls seemed to sit all together in the right front seats. Another group of girls sat in the left rear seats of the classroom.... The group girls numbered about six. They were doing

> most of the talking in the classroom. This group seems to be in the most social, especially for the first day of school. Group girls, who number about seven (and were the ones sitting near the front of the room) seemed to be on the quiet side, and did not question the teacher.

Students initially described themselves in terms of group membership. Within the first fifteen minutes of observation on the first day of school, one of the 8th grade girls introduced herself and her friends as "the click."

The school staff also identified 8th grade students in terms of peer group membership. The principal, in our initial meetings, noted the 8th grade students in particular could be divided into "good" and "bad" groups. and asserted that qualities of these groups contributed to the deportment of the class. The 8th grade teacher acknowledged this fact as well, noting differences which separated "good" groups of girls from "bad" ones. In general, the staff saw these groups as organized factions to be dealt with and controlled.

The peer structure in the 8th grade had the following characteristics. First, a number of groups existed as identified by all informants at the site. Second, friendships and group membership was sex-stratified as in the 2nd grade. This rule was not rigid, however, as some cross-sex friendships formed by the end of the year. Third, although a status hierarchy existed, it was not in the strict linear form found in the 2nd grade. Finally, and most important, the groups were bounded and stable over time, and were independent of any activity context.

Patterns of group relations. The seating pattern observed on the first day of school fit the pattern of peer associations which recurred over the

course of the school year. The boys formed one group, while the girls were split three ways. Two of the girl's groups "hung together" quite frequently, while the third was rather like a loose network of friends. Remarkably, the teacher and all interviewed students agreed that this social structure existed.

Researcher: Could you tell me what kinds of groups existed in September?

Ms. A.: As far as I know, two and a half. There was the Click and there was the Clack (Group A and part of B described on the first day of school), and then there were some kids that were in neither, really.

Researcher: What are some of the groups in your class?

Chrissy: (a student) The Click, and (gives the names of the Clack plus two boys). But in the boys I think it's Bob, David, Jim and the rest of the boys. All the boys hang together.

Researcher: What about Flo and the other kids?

Chrissy: They just hang around together.

Researcher: What are some of the groups in class?

Jack: There's the Click, and there's the Clack. There's Flo and Mary, they usually talk with one

another, and Lucy. Harry and Jim and Ken hang together a lot. They live kinda close, 'cept for Jim, but they're still real good friends.

Researcher: Anybody else?

Jack: The other people are kinda just loners. They come with anybody they usually want. They get tired of one and they go to the other.

All involved at the school gave similar descriptions of the social structure of the 8th grade (see Figure 1). The principal, parents, aides, and even former teachers of this class could name the friendship associations accurately.

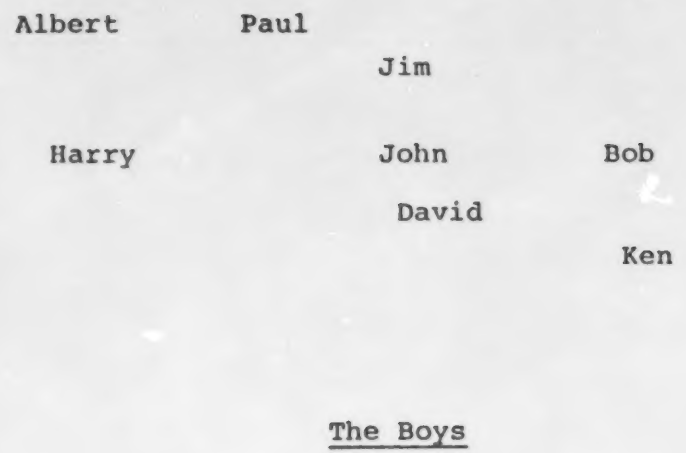
From these descriptions and our own observations, a stable structure emerged. The boys were largely undifferentiated, with a few holding membership in the main peer groups.

Sex-stratified relationships. As in the 2nd grade, the peer structure was sex-stratified. For the most part, all friendships occurred between members of the same sex. However, some boys did manage to strike up friendships with a few of the girls. Some of this can be traced to their emerging sexual feelings. As the teacher noted:

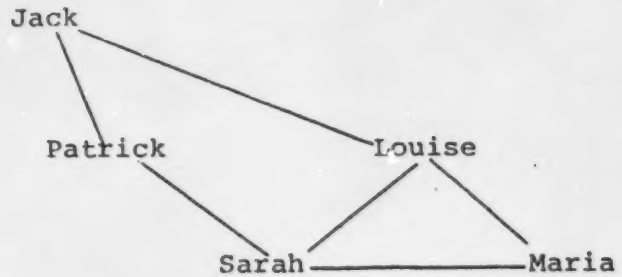
Ms. A.: (The school authorities) are sort of used to boys and girls not mingling. I think they're getting to the age now where it is kind of a big deal. Like in the morning over in that corner (near the rear of the classroom), if you come in

Figure 1

Social Organization of the Eighth Grade

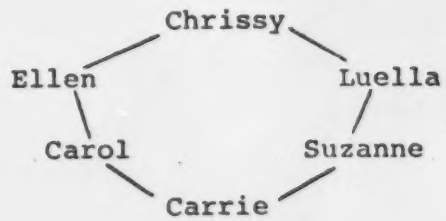


The Boys



The Clack

Flo's Friends



The Click

early, there's a big to-do in the morning. Dave likes Ellen and Ellen likes him, but neither of them is about to admit it. They're hitting on each other and everybody is saying, 'Oh, they like each other!' and they say, 'No we don't!' They're just realizing that maybe there is something exciting going on there.

Researcher: I think I had something down in my notes about that from later in the day.

Ms. A.: They probably do it if I go out (of the room) or something. Somebody, we don't know who, wrote their names in a heart on the wall down by (the 7th grade teacher's) door and they blame each other and the rest of the class blames them both. There was this big to-do because we had to erase it. Nobody was going to erase it because they weren't the ones writing it on there, so....

Researcher: Other people found that on the wall?

Ms. A.: I think everybody has seen it.

Dave was not a member of the Click (Ellen's group), nor was Ellen a close friend of any of the boys. Ellen and Dave were actors playing out stereotypic sex roles for the classroom to witness. At no time could this have been

described as a friendship. Furthermore, this activity lasted only a month, and even within that time Ellen and Dave were seldom seen together.

Some boys and girls did manage to form a loosely formed group by the end of the school year. The teacher notes:

> Ms. A.: I think some of those boys are good friends—like Jack and Louise, Dave, Patrick and Bob. I guess if you want, you can put them in the Clack. Because of the way the playground is structured they don't play together at recess or anything. They would if you let them, but they don't.
>
> Researcher: Do the boys have much contact with the girls? Some of them. I think Dave and Jack and Louise and Lucy maybe, try to get together outside of school. I know over Christmas they were planning to go ice skating. I don't think they ever did, but they were planning on it. They seem to be just good friends. It doesn't seem to be a boyfriend-girlfriend kind of thing.

This was a much different situation from strictly segregated relations of the first days of school.

The status hierarchy. A status hierarchy was present in 8th grade. However, the nature of the hierarchy differed by sex. Among the boys, there was

a linear status hierarchy (similar to the one in 2nd grade). Status was individually determined. Among the girls, status was bestowed in part by group membership. Groups of girls rather than individual girls competed for status.

The boys were generally viewed as undifferentiated.

Researcher: So you really don't have a group of boys.

Jim: No, not no big group.

Even the girls had this perception.

Researcher: How about the boys, are there any groups of friends in the boys?

Mary: I think the boys all just stick together as one.

One boy even gave an egalitarian reason why the boys did not have cliques:

Researcher: Now someone like you, you're not in a group?

Harry: No

Researcher: So therefore you're no...

Harry: See the boys, they don't divide themselves into groups, they all hang together. They wouldn't be considered dividing into groups.

Researcher: I see. Now why don't they divide into groups?

Harry: I don't know.... They feel that they can get along with each other, all together, not dividing into groups.

Researcher: How do you know everybody feels that way?

Harry: The way they act. Like sometimes they fight, which is common, but other times they just hang around together and all.

This collective spirit could be felt at the lunch table. The researcher ate lunch with the boys on occasion. They would sit at the same places, and no one was ever excluded from the table, regardless of popularity. As one of the boys noted, this was different from the girl's lunchroom behavior:

Researcher: I do notice that the girls try to arrange themselves so they'll sit together (in their friendship groups).

Jack: That's the Click.

Researcher: That's not you (the boys).

Jack: No.

The boys were unconcerned with the social structure. They saw themselves and were seen by the class as one big, undifferentiated, happy family.

However, there were marked status differences within the boys group. For instance, in playground activities, some boys were acknowledged as the best.

Researcher: What kind of people would you want on your team?

Jim: Like Ken, Bob, and Jack and all of them and let the other team have the worst.

Researcher: What group are you usually in (on the playground)?

Harry: Jim's, Paul's, John's and sometimes Ken s. Usually it goes back and forth (these assignments vary). But usually it isn't fair teams, not with Jack and Bob (both on the same side).

Although boys hung together, there were clear ranks assigned to the members. Two boys of high status commented about the lows:

Researcher: Why don't you like to hang with those kids (Harry, Ken and Jim)? What's different about them that makes you not want to hang out with them?

Jack: I wouldn't mind it myself, but they act kind of weird sometimes.

Researcher: Give me an example.

Jack: Like Harry. Out on the playground and all, he doesn't do the same kind of stuff that we do. I don't know, he's just the kind of person that just likes to walk around, he doesn't like to do anything.

Researcher: What about the boys (as friends making remarks about each other)?

David: Well, they put Harry down a lot. Because everybody calls him gay and stuff just because he's doing stuff like the other guys do. Some guys just want to play around like rugby. He'll play, but, I mean, they just don't like him.

However, the boys did try to get Harry to join playground activities. This effort derived from their nominal belief in "all for one, one for all."

Status rank among the boys was not only related to playground athletic ability, but also to classroom achievement and acceptance by the girls. Jim and Harry received poor grades in class, while Jack, Patrick, and Bob were said to be the smartest. Harry and Jim also were from lower class backgrounds, while boys of high status were from more stable working class homes. Jack, Bob and Patrick were also members of the Clack, which had initially been an all girls group.

The girls, however, showed marked differences. One of the girls, when asked about the groups in the room in late September, gave a rank order:

Researcher: identify the groups in your classroom.

Luella: Well, there are the high class kids. Smart, good girls, who get good grades. Me, Carrie, Rosa, Chrissy, Carol, and Suzanne. The middle set, they're Louise, Sarah, and Mary. The lower set are Brenda, Flo, and Lucy.

At another time. Luella also stratified the class by family income. She said the lower set was poor, didn't care about themselves, and didn't dress nicely on dress-up days.

These three "sets," as Luella called them, were nearly identical to the groups we observed on the first day of school. The high set, or Luella's set, was known as "the Click." This was Group A in previous notes. Both the middle set, which was known as "the Clack," and the lower set constituted Group B from our previous notes. Luella was not the only one to give this description. Everyone in the class, as well as the teacher and the principal identified similar divisions. In comparison to the 8th grade boys, to the 2nd grade, and to other classrooms in which observations were made, the 8th grade girls had evolved clear groups.

The girls associated differences in personality with membership in a particular group. The Click was more "mature," the Clack "tom-boyish." Individual differences were no longer as important as group differences. These attributed group differences served as boundary markers.

Researcher: What is the difference between the Click and some of the other groups of friends?

Ellen: I think it's the different personalities. We're like girls that are like more mature, and we don't like playing games (the Clack liked to play sports, usually with the boys), so we'll just stand there and talk. And they (the Clack), like the other group of girls in the class, they like play frisbee and dodge and all this stuff, and that's just the way we act and stuff. That's different.

Researcher: Could you be best friends with someone who wasn't in your group, like Louise and Sarah (the clack)? Could you every have the same kind of friendship with them that you do with other kids in the Click?

Carrie: No, I'm being very blunt about this, 'cause I know Sarah and Louise and those two people and myself don't have anything in common. I mean nothing, and in order to have a best friend you have to share some kind of interests. It's just like looking at a total stranger when I look at Louise and Sarah.

The girls perceived each group as acting independently of the other. They saw each group as having its own beliefs and attitudes.

Ellen: Sarah and Louise have like, they have the same likes and beliefs and all this junk.

Researcher: Well, what are their same likes?

Ellen: O.K. Louise and Sarah, the like, I don't know, they both like poetry and all that stuff.

Researcher: And you don't?

Ellen: Oh, I like it, but I don't dwell on it They like do it all day sometime and they color a

lot. I like it, but I do it a home sometimes, really.

Researcher: So what different beliefs do they have?

Ellen: I don't know, but see we believe that we all should hang together...

The Click's unifying refrain was that they should hang together and be close. Even though their activities also served to set them off from the rest of the class, their belief in cohesiveness was their main defining characteristic.

Group competition. The Click had high status at the beginning of the year due to their previous organization. They had been elected class officers in the 7th grade, and were re-elected by a landslide in the 8th. All four class officers were Click members: Luella, President; Carrie, Vice-President; Ellen, Treasurer; Maria, Secretary. Maria would later leave the Click and class office as well. In September, the class resembled a simple linear hierarchy, with the class officers or the Click at the top of the ladder. In October, Louise and Sarah became upset with the Click's behavior and tough attitudes. Sarah said that the Click drank, smoked and "did drugs." She thought that the rest of the students should organize to stop this perceived menace. Sarah and Louise formed "the Clack" as a response. The Clack was a group designed to complete directly with the Click for status.

These two groups competed actively for status in the eyes of the rest of the class members. In the fall, Sarah brought in a camera so that she would have a picture of the entire class for posterity. Everyone in the class except the Click thought it was a good idea, and lined up for the picture one

afternoon. Luella participated reluctantly, and noted that Sarah's camera was cheap and would probably ruin the shot. Luella and the other girls in the Click made plans to bring their cameras in the next day. They said that their cameras were more expensive and would take better pictures. They never followed through. But it was important for the Click to claim they were better than the Clack.

The gym teacher wanted to organize field hockey teams to compete after school in the early spring. The Click formed one team, and the Clack immediately volunteered to provide the opposition. Louise commented just before the big game that she had been waiting for three years to show everyone that they could beat the Click. The Clack lost. However,it was equally important to the Clack to claim that they were better than the Click.

Events took place that would eventually alter the competitive relationship between the groups. Luella transferred to another school. Maria got in an argument with the remaining members of the Click, and joined the Clack. Suzanne was admitted to the Click, and by spring a few of the boys were also allowed in the Clack. The nuclei of the two groups remained intact, but the edges of the structure were in a state of flux. The Click had been labeled "bad girls" by the school staff and some parents, and were singled out by these groups as in need of discipline. The Click realized it was time to make peace, and began to reach out to Sarah.

Researcher: Let's take the Clack. Could you tell me how they relate to the other kids in the class? take Sarah for example.

Ms. A.: She's changed too. Like yesterday was her birthday and the Click bought her lunch. They paid for her lunch as a birthday present. What she did was—she told me she was going to do it, but I didn't think she'd have the guts to do it—she let them pay for it and then she went and sat with the other people after they (the Click) paid for her lunch. Those kids (the Click) were just sitting there looking like, 'I don't believe this just happened.' She was so cool about it, nobody said a word to her. I asked her today if she got any shit because of it and she said no, that nobody said anything. The Click gave her $5 for her birthday. $5 is a lot of money for these kids. That's a strange thing to do for someone who isn't a real close friend. I'm not sure why, but I think some of the people in the Click are reaching out to her. At first she was kind of wondering if they were up to something. I don't know what they're thinking....there seems to be some kind of change going on there.

There had been a change. The status competition had been called off.

Carrie: (Click member)—In the beginning of the 8th grade, we never go along with anyone else — I mean it was consistent fighting. In the begin-

ning of the year I got into this big fight with Sarah and I don't know, it's like ever since Ms. A. came along she has been tying us all together, and, hey, you better get along with this person and that person and it is working 'cause you find all of this out. You feel kind of dumb for hating the person 'cause inside they are really a good person. I guess that's it.

The Click, with some urging from the teacher, decided to cooperate rather than compete. The Clack had similar feelings.

Lucy: (Clack member)—Well see sometimes when we all hang, me, Louise, Sarah, Maria, we all hang with Flo and them or something, but like when we play at lunch time, we like to play jumprope. All the 8th grade girls will come over and we'll all play together.

We never observed the Click playing jumprope with the other girls, nor was it reported in interviews. However, this girl perceived the groups as friendly to each other. In the following passage, she denies that the groups exist (really meaning the hostilities have ended) while still identifying the Click (noting that divisions still exist).

Researcher: So there really aren't that many groups, is that what you're saying?

Lucy: No, but if there is really a problem I thought that Maria or Sarah or Louise (the Clack)

couldn't solve, I'd go to somebody in the Click.

Researcher: What kind of problem would that be, for example?

Lucy: Maybe if I had a drug problem or something...I don't know.

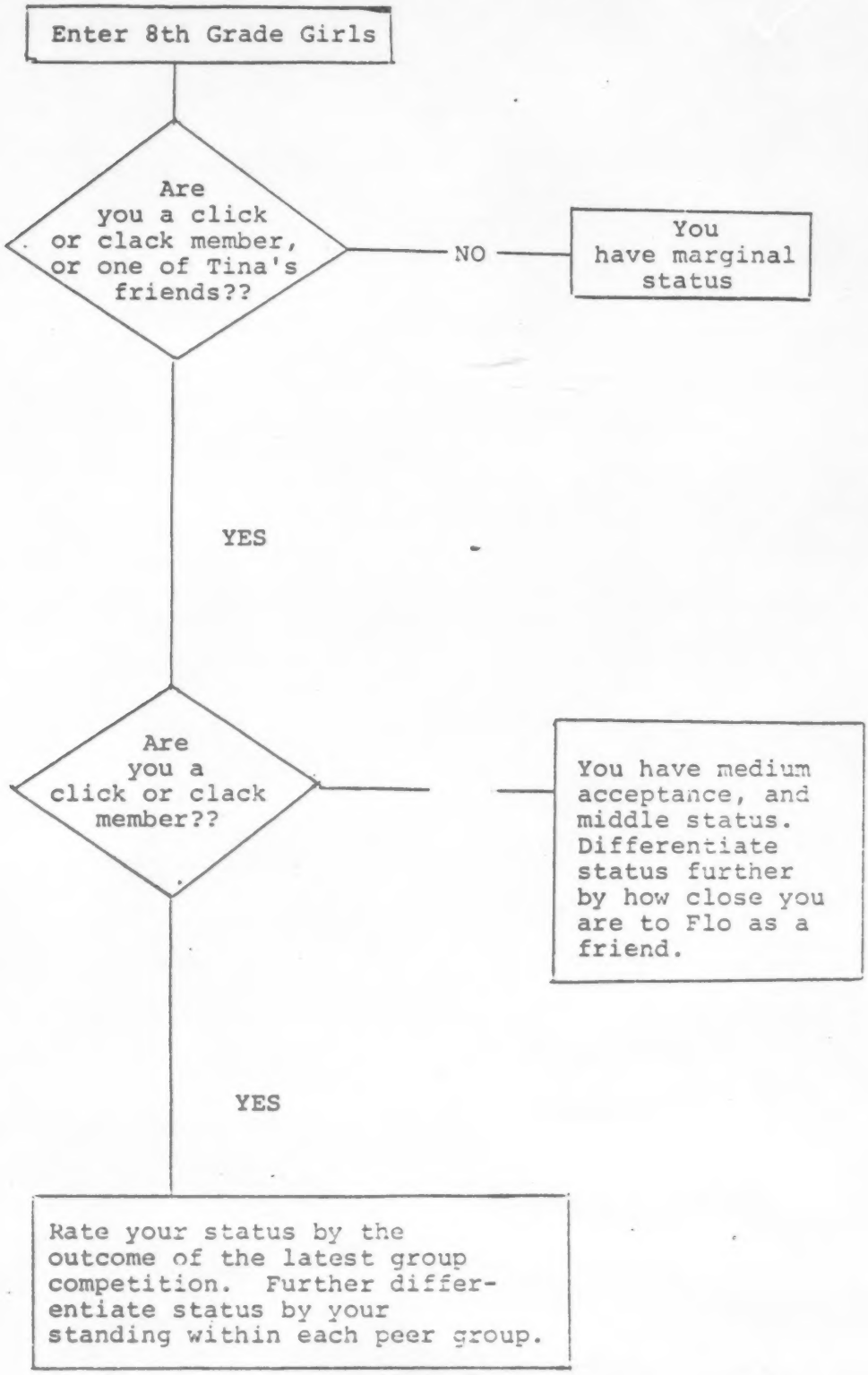
By spring, a feeling of cooperation existed between the two groups. But the dependable friendships for the Clack were still within the group.

Characteristics of the click and clack. By the end of the 8th grade, the girl's status structure took the form of a set of nested classes. Status assignment depended on the tests schematized in Figure 2. Among the girls, it did not matter whether one was tougher, brighter, or smarter to assure high status. Sarah was tough, and Louise was smart, buy enjoyed popularity only if the Clack was winning the battle with the Click. For any 8th grade girl, a strong solid group could overcome the liabilities of inadequate personal characteristics, such as perceived weakeness or lack of intelligence.

The stability of the Click and the Clack. The Click and the Clack were stable bounded groups that existed independent of context. Both groups made an effort to be together in the lunchroom, in the classroom, and on the playground. Just after Christmas, the school began getting funds for the federal school lunch program. This meant that those buying their lunch had to line up separately from those bringing their lunch from home. The principal decided that each child, after buying their lunch, should proceed to the next available open seat at a lunch table, in order. This meant that students could no longer sit with whomever they wanted. Members of the Click and the Clack found that if they got to the lunchroom first, and positioned themselves correctly in the lunch line, each group could sit together at a separate table.

Figure 2

Flow chart of 8th grade girls status group hierarchy


Enter 8th Grade Girls
Are you a click or clack member, or one of Tina's friends??
NO
You have marginal status
YES
Are you a click or clack member??
You have medium acceptance, and middle status. Differentiate status further by how close you are to Flo as a friend.
YES
Rate your status by the outcome of the latest group competition. Further differ-entiate status by your standing within each peer group.

On the playground, each group had its territory. The Click hung out by the church porch, Flo and Mary stayed near the rectory steps, while the Clack played organized games or roamed in the center of the playground. The groups remained the same regardless of the activities of anyone else on the playground.

In the classroom, the students requested that they not only sit near friends, but sit in their groups. Since the two groups were large, when the teacher attempted to "break them up" by assigning seats, any one member was never more than one seat away from any other member. The groups dealt with this contrived separation by passing notes, and by using unstructured class time to meet together, despite the teacher's admonitions. No matter what activity presented itself, the girls actively kept their organization together.

The Click, the Clack, and the "Clubs"

How did such strong peer organizations come to be in the 8th grade? The Click and the Clack each had a history, as recalled by the children and the school staff. Through these histories, we can reconstruct the formative processes of peer group formation at St. Angelas.

The history of the Clack. The Clack, in the words of the teacher, was a "determined" group. Louis, Sarah, and Lucy were tired of the domination of the Click in classroom affairs. They often complained, in informal conversations on the playground, that the Click was responsible for the entire 8th grade getting a "bad" name throughout the school. The Click was said to be involved in drugs, and certain acts of petty vandalism in the school. Sarah said that this behavior would "cost" the entire classroom its class trip and other graduation perquisites. She said that she had learned this through

conversations with her teacher as well as the principal. The students who would eventually form the Clack thought that a new, visible peer group was necessary to counteract the negative image of the 8th grade created throughout the school by the Click.

Thus, the Clack was born. Louise and Sarah added Lucy and Mary and gave themselves the derivative name. The Clack was well organized. There were membership criteria: one had to have at least a marginal friendship with Louise and Sarah, be involved in school activities, swear off delinquent activities (such as drugs or smoking), and most importantly, resent the status of the Click. The group attempted to stay together across contexts. They ate together at lunch, selectively associated with one another on the playground, and made tentative plans to meet after school. As such, the Clack met the requirements of our definition of group. More importantly, Louise and Sarah exhibited the knowledge of the importance of being socially organized. They knew that the Clack would provide them certain benefits, much like a lobby, at St. Angela's. That groups were more than for play, and had utility within a bureaucracy was an important realization for these girls.

Although mixed sex-relations violated the informal code of separation, some of the Clack members were boys. This was not surprising. Sarah was known as a "tom-boy." She and Louise often spent time on the boys' side of the playground with the intention of entering athletic activities. Louise's family lived near Jack's (one of the Clack members), and the two had played together on the city streets since kindergarten. Finally, once Mary and Lucy departed, there were few girls left in the class who might have fulfilled the membership criteria. The only logical alternative for Louise and Sarah was to recruit sympathetic boys.

After Christmas, Maria left the Click and joined the Clack. This was a major coup for the new group. Maria's defection helped the Clack to pull even in the status competition. The Click decided to make peace.

What was the basis for the Clack friendship patterns? Jack said that the roots went back to the 7th grade.

Researcher: So what about your group? When did your group sort of start thinking of itself as a group? When did you notice that everyone hung together?

Jack: Last year.

Researcher: Why? And can you remember when?

Jack: I think it was in the middle of 7th grade. Yeah, because everybody started — we had different teachers and stuff and we were changing classes and all and we had problems with the teachers and everything and we needed people to talk to.

Researcher: So you and Louise and Maria and Bob and Sarah all started hanging together at that point?

Jack: Yes.

Researcher: Even Maria? I though Maria was part of the Click (at that time)?

Jack: She was.

Researcher: So Maria didn't really come into your group.

Jack: She was, yeah. She was the one that always used to come over and talk to us. But she was still in that group then.

According to Jack, the Clack was an outgrowth of friendships which existed in the 7th grade. However on the first day of school, the friendships between Maria (who was then a member of the Click), the two boys, and Louise and Sarah, did not exist. They all associated with one another, but not within a recurring structure such as the Clack. The friendship network that Jack mentioned was not a reality, but a reconstruction of the past in terms of the present social arrangement.

The newness of the Clack was observed by one of the Click members.

Researcher: O.K. What about Louise's group? When did that start?

Chrissy: This year.

Researcher: This year? Why did it start?

Chrissy: I don't know — well, see Maria was in the Click and all of a sudden she started moving out and we were wondering why 'cause we didn't do nothing to her then we asked her and she said she's tired of getting in trouble all the time. So she moved out ... we didn't push her

> out...and...that is when she started hanging around with Louise and everything. And they just become (a group) this year a couple months ago.

Researcher: They weren't a group last year?

Chrissy: No.

The Clack was formally planned and put together by Sarah and Louise at the urging of the school staff. The two girls were unsuccessful at first, but still felt that the Clack was necessary. After adding some boys, and more importantly, Maria, as members, the group became stable and solidified.

The history of the Click. The Click had a longer history. All of the girls in the Click had been at St. Angela's since 1st grade, and three of the six had gone to kindergarten together. Since each classroom was self-contained, and there was only one class per grade, the girls had been in the same educational environment together for seven years. Ellen, Chrissy, and Carol had lived in close proximity to one another in Southeast for many years. Carrie lived near them until she moved to the northeast part of town; even after the move, Carrie visited her friends in the neighborhood on a regular basis, usually over weekends. The four girls who formed the nucleus of the group had longstanding neighborhood and school ties.

How did the Click form? The girls remembered starting a "club", very much like the ones begun in 2nd grade. The girls modeled their "club" on a television show.

Researcher: How did you guys in the Click become friends?

Ellen: Well, in the 6th grade, we had this little group, and we was called Charlie's Angels. And we'd collect photographs and everything, and we'd exchange 'em and all this stuff. Then in 7th grade, we became closer, 'cause we all got suspended — whatever, O.K. — and that brang us closer.

Researcher: So you started a group called Charlie's Angels. Well, that's interesting. Why did you start doing that? I mean, you didn't do that before in the 5th grade, right?

Ellen: Uh-huh.

Researcher: So why all the sudden change?

Ellen: O.K. Like in 5th grade, we were close — well, we were friends, not really close, right? In the 6th grade, I guess we became closer, and in the 7th grade, we was really close. And, you know, we had the same interests, 'cause that's when we knew each other more. We knew how we were alike. We knew what our interests were and all this stuff, and we knew everybody almost inside and out, and we had the same things, and we

just like havin' a little fun. When we had a little fun, it seemed to always get us in trouble.

The girls formed a "club" by imitating the organization of the adult world. It began with a few friends, and soon spread to the entire class. The girls said that the demands of the adult world, and the requirements of growing up, hastened the transformation of the "club" into the Click.

Researcher: What about Charlie's Angels? Do you remember anything about Charlie's Angels and your friends?

Carrie: Oh, it was weird. It sounds really babyish now when I think about it. Alright, in the 5th grade we had this club, I guess that is what you want to call it, and it had to do with Charlie's Angels. It was just when (the TV series) Charlie's Angels was getting started, and, you see, Ellen and I liked them a lot. And each one had our own separate individual...then in 5th grade it was like, whatever, we had nicknames like "Sabrina" (A TV character) written all over my desk or whatever person we had. Then we started getting into this bit where we had a lot of other friends and we had to include them in our groups so we had one group like Sabrina...at the end, we had a secretary and president, a

vice-president, and sooner or later it got into being the whole class being there.

Researcher: How does that differ from what you do now?

Carrie: We don't go around now saying, 'Hey, I'm Kate Jackson,' and, 'Hey, I'm Farah Fawcett' (the two stars of the TV series). It seems like we do our own thing. Like before in 5th grade, it was all we could about as kinds of TV shows — 'Hey, man, did you see this and all that.' Then in 8th grade it's gotten to be more like, 'Hey, did you see that GUY walking across the street.' Now it seems like everybody is facing reality instead of going into the TV world.

The teachers also influenced the formation of the Click. One day in 7th grade the teacher accused them of being a "a clique". The name stuck.

Carrie: After getting suspended and all everybody became closer. Like they were taking up for the other person so much that it was — really close. And then all of the sudden (the principal and the 7th grade teacher) said there is a click of girls doing this and there is a click of girls doing that. (They) were talking about us and wouldn't just come out and pinpoint us. So that is how we became the Click.

Each of the girls was beginning to get closer to the other at the beginning of the 7th grade. But getting suspended together, and, more importantly, being branded as "the clique," made them a coherent group. The external label (spelled in their own way) helped them to become organized. They thought clique, pronounced click, meant "clicking together."

However as the teachers saw the Click forming, they realized that control was necessary. The staff began to exert pressure by attempting to "spread apart" the group. Seating patterns were manipulated, and work group assignments were changed. The Click, who were a loose group of friends at that time and nothing more, were now considered a adversary group. They were singled out because they acted in unison. Previously when a student broke a rule, only the student was punished. By the 8th grade, when a student broke a rule the whole group got punished.

Conclusions & Educational Implications

Our observations suggest that peer groups do not magically appear at the onset of puberty. Instead, the adolescent peer group has clear developmental antecedents. Children at first are not organized by peer group. They begin to accommodate to social structure models in the adult world, and partially assimilate them via imitation. The stable adolescent peer group is the result of the interaction of these twin processes (Piaget, 1932).

In the lower grades, strict peer groups do not exist. Only overlapping pairs of friendships can be observed. These tend to be few in number, and are generally context dependent. Young children join a play activity based on the content of the activity itself rather than according to who is playing. When 2nd graders form "clubs," anyone is permitted to join as long as they like the

activities associated with the "club" name. One joins the Kiss because one likes the music of the rock group from which the "club" takes its name. These "clubs" change names and membership often, such that instability reigns.

In the middle grades, children become aware that groups have importance. They begin to observe adult social organization and attempt to imitate it. This piecemeal imitation is similar to Piaget's reproductive assimilation. The children at this level have only a partial degree of social organization. Around 6th and 7th grade, the informal organization of the "club" is given a new meaning. Teachers and other adults, upon observing the maturing children, begin to view children's behavior in terms of organized groups rather than individuals. Characteristics of adult social organization are increasingly attributed to what were only "clubs" previously. At this level, when a student breaks a rule, friends are also made culpable. Students become responsible not only for their own behavior, but for the conduct of their friends as well. Teachers begin to classify students in terms of good or bad cliques. The message is clear: being together with friends carries certain consequences. Peer associations are not longer viewed as innocent imitative role play.

By adolescence, students realize that group organization not only has negative consequences, but can also help achieve goals within the school bureaucracy. They realize that a social is greater than the sum of its parts: a strong group is more powerful that a random collection of individuals.

The Click argued with the school administration over a pending suspension of one of its members. They learned to bargain with the classroom teacher, to exchange a promise of good behavior in class for the privilege of playing a stereo at break time and (especially interesting for a parochial school) for the right to use mild profanity in the classroom without retribution. As one

of the Click members noted, "We have the power in the school." The amount of actual power is irrelevant here. What is important is that students, socially organized, now perceive that they have power to achieve a goal. To this end, there is a realization that cohesiveness, constant interaction, strict membership criteria, and common beliefs are extremely important for the peer group to function within the school.

Eight' graders therefore construct stable peer groups. The existence of these groups no longer depends upon the context of an activity, but are based on a common belief that "hanging together and being close" are important. The older children hang out together regardless of context. The same groups can be observed at hockey games after school, in the lunchroom, and on the playground. Even when teachers try to separate the groups, members find ways to interact and remain together (Cusick, 1973).

There are commensurate differences in the way status is apportioned. For 2nd graders, academic achievement, teacher approval, and having at least one close friend determine status position among classmates. Among 8th grade boys, athletic ability is an additional requirement. Note that these characteristics are of an individualistic nature. For an 8th grade girl, status depends in part upon which peer group she belongs to. Girls with low grades or little athletic ability are therefore able to achieve high status within the classroom simply by joining the most dominant peer group. Girl's groups, rather than individuals, compete for status in the 8th grade classroom.

Factors affecting peer group development

Since the purpose of the research was descriptive, we can offer only hypotheses as to mechanisms accounting for this sequence of development. We believe that two factors have an influence: the child's emergent cognitive capacity, and the salience of the adult social environment.

Emergent cognitive capacity. Seriation and classification abilities probably underlie the maintenance of stable status hierarchies. It is therefore not surprising that 2nd graders, most of whom are most probably entering the concrete operational stage, can form and maintain a classroom hierarchy. Other empirical work has demonstrated the connection between competence at Piagetian seriation tasks and the ability to produce a stable rank order of elementary school peers (Omark and Edelman, 1974). Likewise, we would expect that 8th graders' abstract notion of "group" and their tendency to reason logically about its functions indicates the emergence of formal reasoning ability. However, this cannot be verified until our notions of peer development are fully operationalized and measured in tandem with standard cognitive tasks.

Both direct and indirect effects of adults on the peer group development of the students at St. Angela's were observed. Movies and television seemed to provide the only models imitated by the younger children. The Wanderers, Kiss, Charlie's Angels, and the Mighty Mouse "clubs" were all copies of mass media programming. We never observed non-media groups as, for example, a stamp collecting, kite-flying, or bike riding "clubs," which might have been more easily patterned after indigenous children's activities. Only a few children were members of youth organizations such as Little League or Scouts.

Most important, the children chose not to imitate these groups, and instead picked those offered by the mass media.

Salience of social environment. The teachers and school staff had a direct effect on the children's development of peer groups. The teachers played a major role by providing information to students about their social interaction. Teachers identified patterns of peer associations as group behavior. Thus, the students could use this information to form an abstract notion of group. For example, the Click received its name from a 7th grade teacher. The teacher's label, according to most of the 8th graders interviewed, stimulated cohesiveness, and indicated to the students the importance of social organization.

Educational Implications

Media programming provides peer group role models that children imitate at an early age. Young children may pick a salient message from these models: friendship relations are more important than academic learning. This is not to dispute the fact that having friends in school is important to a child's adjustment. However it is possible that larger-than-life media models exaggerate the importance of social relations.

The teacher at a later point in the student's career may exacerbate this misplaced emphasis on human relations over academic achievement. Student peer groups are given attributes of adult groups at a time when children are only imitating what they see around them, and have only a loose social organization. We recommend that teachers deemphasize the role of child coalitions in accounting for the behavior of students in pre-adolescence. We believe the emphasis dilutes valuable instructional energies.

However, the behavior of both adults and children in schools is controlled in part by the bureaucratic nature of the school itself. We have documented how student peer groups from in part as a response to the school bureaucracy. Membership in a well-organized interest group is necessary in order to pursue one's goals in any complex bureaucracy. The larger and more complex the organization, the more interest groups tend to form. Likewise, the larger and more complex a school organization is, the more it becomes necessary for students to organize into various peer factions. Even at a small school like St. Angela's, peer groups were recognized as an important problem. In larger schools, the problem multiplies at the expense of academic instruction. Cusick (1973) estimated that 80% of student time is spent in non-academic school activities. Decentralization of school systems would be a major step toward the rectification of this problem. In smaller, more intimate settings, students would not find it necessary to organize into coalitions. We believe that a new emphasis upon academic learning would follow.

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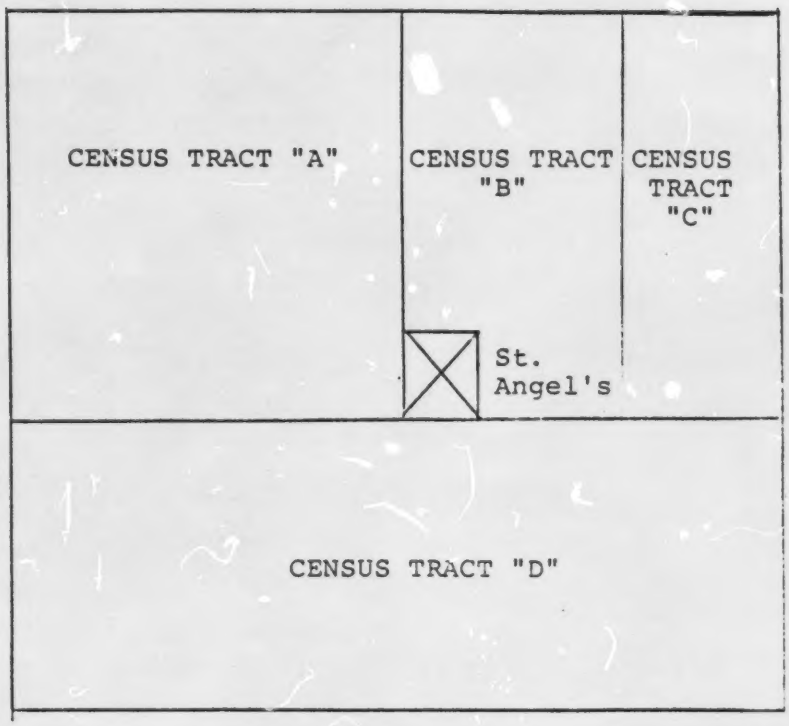

Fig. 3. Location of Census Tracts surrounding St. Angela's.
Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population, South Plainfield, SMSA

Table 2

GENERAL POPULATION OF CENSUS TRACTS

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census tracts:	B,C,D,	A	Combined
Total population	8314	3876	12,190
% black	1	68	22

Table 3

CHILD POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX FOR COMBINED CENSUS AREAS

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Age:	5-9 yrs.	10-14 yrs.
Sex		
Male	622	592
Female	565	551
Total	1187	1143
% of total population	10	9

Table 4

ETHNICITY OF POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population
( )=% of total area population

Census Tracts:	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Foreign stock[1], total	321 (8)	2191 (26)	2512 (21)
Polish	66 (2)	1321 (16)	1387 (11)
Italian	113 (3)	149 (2)	262 (2)
German, Austrian and USSR	94 (2)	325 (4)	419 (3)
Spanish speaking	27 (1)	92 (1)	1[illegible] (1)

[1]Persons reporting as foreign born, or of mixed or foreing parentage.

Table 5

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census Tract:	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Elementary School Enrollment	854	1050	1904
Public school only	742	749	1491
% of total enrollment	71	88	78

Table 6

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census Tract	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Total Labor force	427	2141	2568
% Unemployment	6	13	7

Table 7

MALE OCCUPATIONS BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population
( )=% of total labor force for area

Census Tract:	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Male occupations, over 16			
Clerical	127 (16)	443 (14)	570 (15)
Craftsmen, foremen	106 (14)	542 (18)	648 (17)
Operatives	119 (15)	747 (24)	866 (22)
Laborers	66 (8)	312 (10)	378 (10)
Service Workers	235 (30)	365 (12)	600 (16)
Professionals, Managers and Administrators	50 (6)	362 (12)	412 (11)

Table 8

RESIDENTIAL STATUS BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census Tract:	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Total, occupied housing units	2972	1325	4297
Moved to present house:			
before 1960	298	1343	1641
1960 - 1967	48	805	1353
1968 - 1970	479	824	1303
Occupants not owning auto	1127	1804	2931
% of total residents	85	61	68

Table 9

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY TYPE BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census Tract:	A	B	C	D	Combined
Number of households	-	-	-	-	4347
Persons per household	-	-	-	-	2.8
% of children under 18 in:					
Husband-wife families	28	64	69	72	
Female head families	63	19	15	15	

Table 10

HOUSING PROFILE BY CENSUS TRACT

Source: 1970 Census of Housing and Population

Census Tracts:	A	B,C,D,	Combined
Total number of units	1505	3396	4901
Owner occupied	136	1464	1600
% owner occupied	9	43	33
% white owners	82	98	97
Rented	1189	1558	2747
% black renters	71	2	32